

"In the Latter Days, the sun shall rise from the West"

Holy Prophet Muhammad(Peace and blessings of Allah be on him)



True Islam and the Extremists

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The Ahmadiyya Muslim Community



Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (1835-1908)



AHMADIYYA
MUSLIM COMMUNITY

United States of America

The Ahmadiyya Muslim Community is a religious organization, international in its scope, with branches in 195 countries in Africa, North America, South America, Asia, Australia, and Europe. The Ahmadiyya Muslim Community was established in 1889 by Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad(as) (1835-1908) in Qadian, a small and remote village in the Punjab province of India. He claimed to be the expected reformer of the latter days, the Awaited One of the world community of religions (The Mahdi and Messiah).

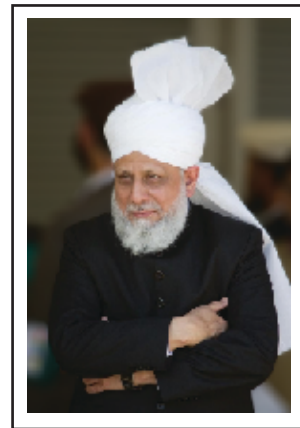
The Movement he started is an embodiment of the benevolent message of Islam – peace, universal brotherhood, and submission to the Will of God – in its pristine purity.

Hazrat Ahmad(as) proclaimed Islam as the religion of man: “The religion of the people of the right path” (98:6). The Ahmadiyya Muslim Community was created under divine guidance with the objective to rejuvenate Islamic moral and spiritual values. It encourages interfaith dialogue, diligently defends Islam and tries to correct misunderstandings about Islam in the West. It advocates peace, tolerance, love and understanding among followers of different faiths. It firmly believes in and acts upon the Qura’nic teaching:

“There is no compulsion in religion” (2:257).

It strongly rejects violence and terrorism in any form and for any reason. After the passing of its founder, the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community has been headed by his elected successors. The present Head of the Community, Hazrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad, was elected in 2003. His official title is Khalifatul Masih V or Fifth Successor of the Promised Messiah(as).

www.alislam.org



Hazrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad,
Khalifatul Masih V (aba)

The Muslim Sunrise

www.muslimsunrise.com

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Muslims follow the name of God's prophets with the prayer *alaihis salaam* or 'may peace be upon him,' and for the Holy Prophet Muhammad, *sallallahu alaihi wasallam* or 'may peace and blessings of God be upon him.' Companions of prophets and righteous personalities who have passed away are saluted by *radhi-Allahu anhu/a* or 'may Allah be pleased with him/her.' While such salutations sometimes are not set out in the text for readability, we encourage readers to offer these prayers as if set out in full.

Dr. Mufti Muhammad Sadiq(ra) (1872-1957) was the first Ahmadiyya Muslim missionary to arrive in America. In 1921, he founded the Muslim Sunrise, which stands today as the longest running Muslim publication in America. The magazine seeks to open discussions on Islam and topics relating to religion in general. It highlights the role of Islam in an ever-changing global society. It provides a platform for public opinion on contemporary issues and presents their solutions from an Islamic perspective.



Acronyms for salutations used in this publication

- sa: Sallallāhu 'Alaihi Wa Sallam (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him)
- as: 'Alaihis-Salām (may peace be upon him)
- ra: Radhi-Allahu 'Anhu/'Anha (may Allah be pleased with him/her)
- rh: Rahimahullāhu Ta'ālā (may Allah shower His mercy on him)
- aba: Ayyadahullāhu Ta'ālā Bi-Nasihil-'Azīz (may Allah support him with His mighty help)

Verse numbers in the references from the Holy Qur'ān count Tasmiya at the beginning of a chapter as the first verse.

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FROM THE HOLY QUR'AN

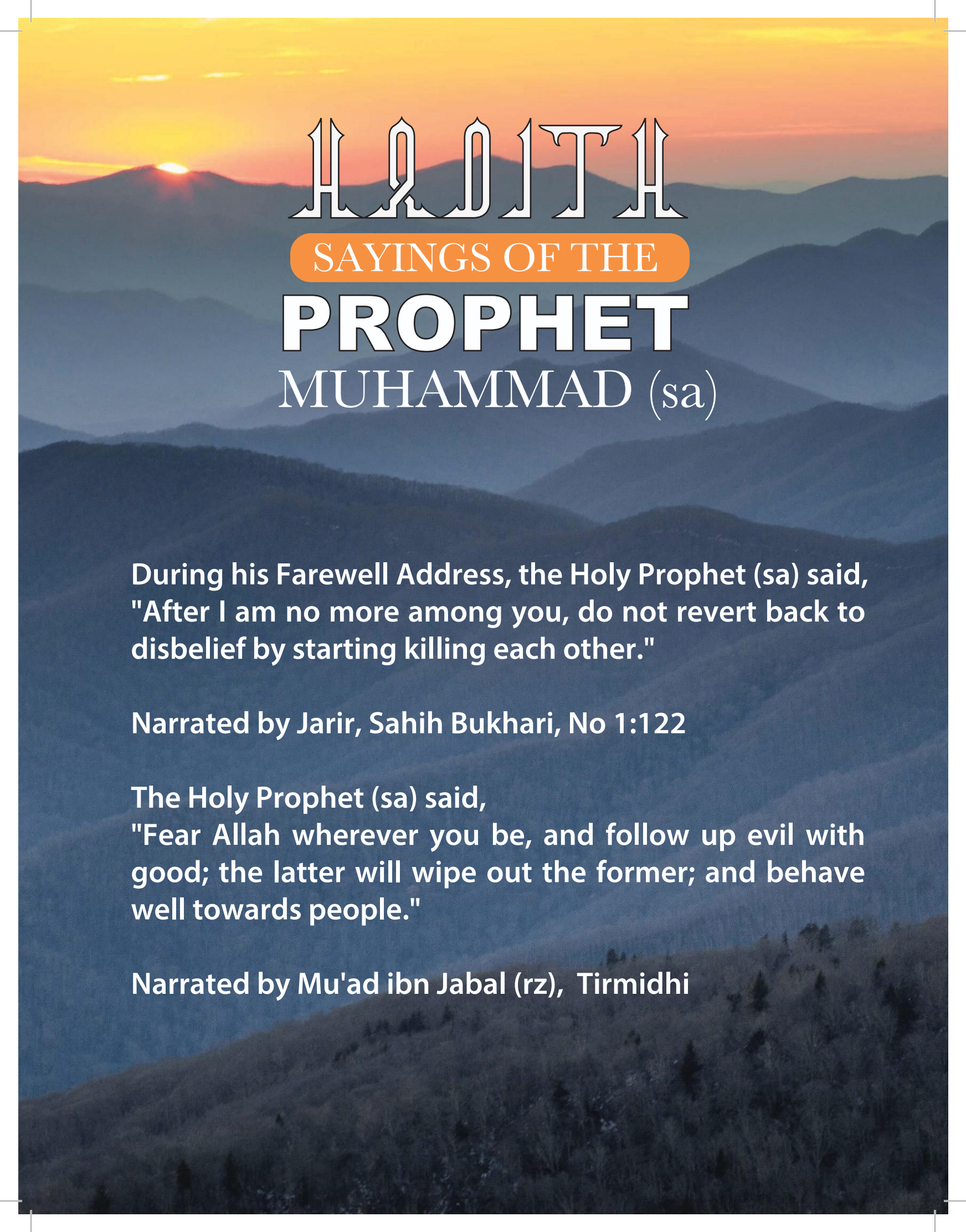
بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ ١

إِنَّ الدِّينَ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ الْإِسْلَامُ ۚ وَمَا
اخْتَلَفَ الَّذِينَ أُوْتُوا الْكِتَابَ إِلَّا مِنْ بَعْدِ
مَا جَاءَهُمْ الْعِلْمُ بَغْيًا بَيْنَهُمْ ۚ وَمَنْ
يَكْفُرْ بِآيَاتِ اللَّهِ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ سَرِيعُ الْحِسَابِ ٢٠

In the name of Allah, the Gracious, the Merciful.

Surely, the true religion with Allah is Islam (complete submission). And those who were given the Book did not disagree but after knowledge had come to them, out of mutual envy. And whoso denies the Signs of Allah, then surely, Allah is quick at reckoning.

The Holy Qur'an, (3:20)



HADITH

SAYINGS OF THE

PROPHET

MUHAMMAD (sa)

During his Farewell Address, the Holy Prophet (sa) said, "After I am no more among you, do not revert back to disbelief by starting killing each other."

Narrated by Jarir, Sahih Bukhari, No 1:122

The Holy Prophet (sa) said,

"Fear Allah wherever you be, and follow up evil with good; the latter will wipe out the former; and behave well towards people."

Narrated by Mu'ad ibn Jabal (rz), Tirmidhi

EDITH

SUMMER 2016

In some political and religious circles it has been announced that a complete ban be put on all Muslims from entering our country. Their main concern is the presence of extremists among the Muslims, and they fear that they are a dangerous threat to the world. The extremists make horrendous attacks on civilized people in the name of their religion. Not only they kill innocent people, but also they mistreat their own women, disregard all basic human rights, and do not advocate freedom of conscience, religion and speech. They preach hatred, and excite their followers to revolt against their rulers. The fear of the extremists is so overwhelming that in the USA there are voices that want to put ban on everybody who is a Muslims, including those who are seeking immigration visas or want to visit the country as tourists.

No one denies the existence of the extremists among the Muslims of the world. But the vast majority of Muslims believe that the extremists are criminals and sinners, and they have nothing to do with the true teachings of the universal religion of Islam. According to the teachings of Islam, they need to be punished and reformed. Islam teaches sanctity of life, love and service to others, and protection of the freedom of religion and expression.

The Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, for over 125 years, has been striving diligently to impart the true teachings of Islam. It forcefully condemns violence in any shape or form, for any reason. In the USA, the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community has launched campaigns such as 'Muslims for Life' and 'Muslims for Loyalty' to implement Islamic teachings into actions. As a result of the 'Muslims for Life' campaign, the Ahmadi Muslims are saving more than 30,000 lives each year through blood drives, and by way of 'Muslims for Loyalty' they are informing the general public that serving their country is integral to the Islamic faith. Presently, to further elucidate the peaceful teachings of Islām and to counter the ominous menace of extremism, a nationwide campaign 'True Islam and the Extremists' has been launched in the USA; the current edition of The Muslim Sunrise is dedicated to this theme.

This issue is presenting articles written to remove misconceptions about Islam that are upheld by Donald Trump, and many others. Topics such as Equality of Women, Freedom of Speech, Separation of Mosque and State, and other common myths about Islām, are included. We hope that this issue of the Muslim Sunrise will be a source of peace, and that it will help the future to be bright, based on a better understanding of Islam and ongoing respectful dialogue among the Muslims and followers of other faith-traditions.

On a separate note, I would like to express my sincere thanks to Falahud Din Shams for his outstanding services to the Muslim Sunrise. Under his able leadership as its Chief Editor for ten long years (2006-2016), the magazine made progress by leaps and bounds in various important directions, and it was transformed into a popular publication with contemporary design. He diligently oversaw the work of all departments, added new features, and ensured that each issue was published on time. Two special issues of the Muslim Sunrise were published under his leadership: one in Spanish and another for the new converts in Islam. Using the latest technology, he introduced a beautiful design, created a website that contains both archived and current issues. The magazine is now read by those in the forefront of scholarly and political circles in the USA.

Mubasher Ahmad

IN THE WORDS OF THE PROMISED MESSIAH^(as)

Misconception about *Jihad* Removed

"The British Government and Jihad"

Islam International Publications Limited, UK, 2006. p. 8

Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, the Promised Messiah (as) denounced violent and bloody interpretation of *jihad*. In his book *The British Government and Jihad*, the Promised Messiah (as) explained the philosophy of *Jihad* as follows:

It should be remembered that today's Islamic scholars (who are called *maulavis*) completely misunderstand *Jihad* and misrepresent it to the general public. The public's violent instincts are inflamed as a result and they are stripped of all noble human virtues. This is in fact what has happened. I know for certain that *maulavis* who persist in propagating these blood-spattered doctrines are in fact responsible for murders committed by ignorant, egotistical people who know nothing of why Islam was forced to fight battles in its early history. When these *maulavis* meet present day rulers, they bow down as if ready to prostrate; but among their own kind they insist repeatedly that this country is "*dar-ul-harb*" [the zone of war]. They consider *Jihad* to be obligatory in their hearts, and few of them think otherwise. They adhere so strongly to their doctrine of *Jihad*—which is completely misguided and entirely contradicts the teachings of the Holy Qur'an and Hadith—that they label as "*dajjal*" [Antichrist] and advocate the murder of anyone who objects. A *fatwa* [edict] of this kind was pronounced against me some time ago. Some of this country's *maulavis* labeled me a *dajjal* and a *kafir* [infidel] and—without fear of the British Government's laws—published a *fatwa* stating that I should be killed, and that it would be a blessed deed to loot my belongings or abduct the women of my house. What was the reasoning for this? Only that I incurred their displeasure because I am the Promised Messiah and preach against their concept of *Jihad*, rejecting notions of the bloodthirsty Messiah and Mahdi whose advent would, they had hoped, allow them to engage in loot and plunder.



Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (as)
The Promised Messiah and Mahdi.



Friday Sermon Synopsis

Delivered by Hazrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad
Khalifatul Masih V
On Dec 19, 2014

Rejection of Extremism:

We observe these days many incidents of barbarity and brutality carried out in Muslim countries. Such episodes do not take place in other countries or at least they do not occur with the same frequency. The developed world raises strong protests against such incidents whether the perpetrators are government workers or any groups or individuals. Recently strong protests took place in USA over some incidents. However, just as much the religion of Islam teaches love and brotherhood, completely contrary to its teachings Muslim governments of today and groups and organisations formed in the name of Islam perpetrate cruelty for personal interests or in the name of peace and in the name of Islam!

Today numerous organizations have been formed in the name of implementing Shariah and they are perpetrating such viciousness that one is left aghast whether these are actions of humans or creatures worse than animals in the guise of humans! Recently an atrocity took place in Pakistan which was not just an atrocity but was the worst example of brutality and viciousness. It made one's hair stand on end and it made mankind scream out in response! Anyone with an iota of humanity screamed out! Indeed four and a half years ago such brutality was also perpetrated in our mosques. A television channel here, probably the BBC, mentioned the worst incidents of Pakistan in the last five years and included the incident of our mosques. Anyhow, our grief at the time and the cruelty perpetrated against us was neither deemed worthy of attention, compassion and condolence by the government [of Pakistan] nor the public, perhaps due to fear of the Maulawis.

However, Ahmadis have compassion for mankind and we are moved to see humanity in distress. Whereas these were our compatriots and perhaps all of them were Muslims. Our hearts are filled with compassion and we feel distress for them and

have great sympathy. Such cruelty perpetrated on them was going to agonise us as indeed it did. Not only were they Pakistani like most of the people sitting in the congregation but they were also Muslims. Also, this incident exceeded all manner of barbarity. The large majority of victims martyred were innocent children some aged five, six and seven years and others ten, eleven and thirteen years. The younger ones would have probably had no idea of terrorism or extremism and perhaps did not know the difference between Muslims and non-Muslims! Yet their lives were taken in a most brutal manner. May God wrap all of them in His cover of mercy and forgiveness and may He also grant patience and steadfastness to their parents. These children were targeted because the so-called implementers of Shariah wanted to avenge Pakistani army.

What kind of Islam is this? What kind of Shariah is this? The Holy Prophet (sa) had strictly forbidden to use force against women and children of even non-Muslims during battle! And when he once questioned a Companion who had killed a Jew child in action, the Companion replied, O Prophet of God, he was only a Jew child killed by mistake, what does it matter? The Holy Prophet (sa) replied was he not an innocent child of man? Such was the standard of sanctity of humanity demonstrated to us by the blessed model of the Holy Prophet (sa) and look at the brutal actions perpetrated in the name of Islam now!

Muslims and non-Muslims both have expressed their horror at this episode of brutality. At the occasion of the first woman Church of England bishop appointed, sentiments of grief were expressed and a minute's silence was observed and prayers were made. Everyone felt the pain regardless of their faith whereas those who are called Muslims proudly took responsibility of the atrocity and showed no remorse!

We observed that anyone with decency expressed pain and condolence. Hearts of Ahmadis have great compassion for mankind and we are ever ready to share grief of others, our hearts are moved at any painful incident. Many letters were received by Hazrat Khalifatul Masih (aba) expressing pain and distress. The incident had a great impact on Hazrat Khalifatul Masih (aba) throughout the day. And in such a situation one prays for the destruction of the cruel. May God soon rid the country of these vicious and wicked people, and rid all Muslim countries of them. Seeing these incidents one is reminded of the oppressions committed against Ahmadis but one also feels great pain for the innocent children. May God grant patience and steadfastness to those children and may He Himself provide for them who have lost their parents. Extremism and cruelty is a tragedy of almost every Muslim country, for example Iraq, Syria and Libya and the worst thing is that all this is being carried out in the name of God and His Prophet!

In the anti-government disturbances in Syria about 130,000 people have died, 6600 of which were children and about one-third were civilians. ISIS has killed thousands and hundreds of women and girls have been lined up and executed because they refused to marry ISIS men. According to another source the number of victims of this oppression and destruction is far greater. One who knows the reality of Islam is befuddled by all this as to which Islamic teaching is being practiced here! And this is being done in the name of the God Who is Most Gracious, Compassionate and Ever Merciful! In the name of the Prophet who was given the title of mercy for all the worlds/mankind! In the name of the Shariah which teaches to be fair to even one's enemy! 'O ye who believe! Be steadfast in the cause of Allah, bearing witness in equity; and let not a people's enmity incite you to act otherwise than with justice. Be always just, that is nearer to righteousness. And fear Allah. Surely, Allah is aware of what you do.' (5:9) Here God elevates the level of the faith of a true believer and if this element of justice is missing then faith is not complete. God enjoins that even enmity should not incline you to be unfair and your models of fairness and justice should become witness to the teaching of Islam. If only those who are known as Muslims self-reflect and see if their acts draw non-Muslims to them or not! Their acts are even pushing Muslims away!

Would the children who saw their friends targeted by the vicious barbarity ever consider the perpetrators as Muslims? And if they did, question will arise in their minds about Islam and accepting it. Not only are these people perpetrating evident murder and mayhem they are also distancing the next generation from Islam. If only those known as Islamic religious leaders who have created these extremist terror organisations in the name of Jihad and sectarianism corrected their faith and gave the next generation the correct teaching of Islam. This

can only be if they accepted what the Imam of the age taught and practiced true Islam themselves and also got others to practice it.

The true and ardent devotee of the Holy Prophet (sa) wrote about the Maulawis: 'The Maulawis will do Islam a great favour if they can unite to dispel this notion from the minds of ignorant Muslims. In so doing, they will not only help to reveal the excellences and beauties of Islam, but will also remove the aversion which religious opponents have for it on account of their misconceptions...' (How to be free from sin, p. 13)

Such was the compassion the Promised Messiah (as) had to spread the true teachings of Islam but who is prepared to listen to him! The objectives of these so-called Maulawis are not to establish sanctity of Islam. Rather they pursue personal and vested interests. There has not been any strong condemnation of this incident by the religious scholars unless they say something today at Friday Prayers. It should be remembered that God states: '...And fear Allah...' and God is not simply aware of everything just for awareness rather, every action of man decides his fate. And those who perpetrate cruelty certainly have a bad ending.

God states about those who profess the Kalima that they are: '...tender amongst themselves...' (48:30). Let alone this, today they treat their own worse than one treats the enemy. They kill hundreds of thousands of their own and they martyr their own children! Do they think they will escape chastisement! Never! 'And whoso kills a believer intentionally, his reward shall be Hell wherein he shall abide. And Allah will be wroth with him and will curse him and will prepare for him a great punishment.' (4:94) And God further states as to who a true believer is: '...and say not to anyone who greets you with the greeting of peace, 'Thou art not a believer.' (4:95)

Islam has established sanctity of brotherhood and if anyone tramples upon it and kills one who professes the Kalima then most certainly he will go to Hell and he will always be under God's curse. Those who die in suicide attacks or while fighting and think they will gain pleasure of God after death are certainly wrong. God has made it very clear that if you kill a believer you will be under God's curse. They have no right to kill one who wishes them peace as a true believer. What on earth was the fault of the innocent children they killed! Those children were seeking knowledge to become useful part of society, to be assets of the country and to spread peace. These are the reasons why they went to school. It is astonishing to listen to the so-called religious leaders who teach extremism in spite of the beautiful teaching of Islam and listening to which the uneducated and the unaware carry out brutal acts! Maybe they consider Hell something out of fables or maybe they do not have faith in the Word of God for they continue to

kill each other. If they do not have perfect belief in the Hereafter, God has also stated about the results of harming the sanctity of brotherhood that one sees in this world: 'And obey Allah and His Messenger and dispute not with one another, lest you falter and your power depart from you. And be steadfast; surely, Allah is with the steadfast.' (8:47)

Today this is exactly what the condition of the Muslim world appears to be, their power is diminishing. Due to in-fighting and numerous terrorist organisations most countries are like battlegrounds. They beg Western powers although they have made an organisation of Muslim countries but that has no standing. They do not have each other's confidence which could facilitate peace and they also have no standing before other countries. Their affairs are managed by the big powers and if their president or prime minister or even military chief visits and has talks with the president or prime minister of a Western country or these countries give them a little encouragement/acceptance our leaders feel as if they have received all the bounties of the world! Their concept of God is all but void and they consider worldly people the source of their permanence. There are endless reasons which are taking Muslim countries towards ruination. An atrocity takes place and there is public outcry for a few days and lo and behold yet again many among the public become instruments in perpetrating barbarity.

Until they accept what God states, until they extend fairness even to the enemy, until they give security to those who greet them with peace, until they establish standards of brotherhood, until governments look after public, until public is complaint to governments and until fear of God is instilled in hearts, such atrocities will continue to take place!

If only our leaders and those known as religious leaders and the public understood this. Pain of Muslim Ummah is also our pain because they are associated with our master. The Imam of the age taught us the ability to have sympathy and love for those who are associated with our master and he said in poetic form:

O heart! Have concession for these people and be compassionate towards them

After all they claim to love my Prophet

They are cruel to us but we do not seek revenge, we pray for their hearts to be clear and may they understand. This feeling of compassion and good will for them has been instilled in our heart by the Promised Messiah (as). In line with Islamic teaching he has taught us to have compassion for your own and for others.

The Promised Messiah (as) said the following:

'True believers and Muslims are enjoined to be gentle and compassionate.'

'Each person should look at himself every day and see as to how much he cares about these matters and how much compassion and good will he has for his brothers.'

'The common purpose of the advent of all Prophets is to establish true and real love of God and to instil special import in love for and rights of humanity and among brothers. Until these are practiced all matters are merely ceremonial.'

'Be compassionate to God's people and do not oppress them with your tongue, hand or by any other means. Always endeavour for the good of humanity. Do not feel arrogant towards anyone even if they are your subordinate and do not verbally abuse anyone even if they verbally abuse you. Become meek, forbearing and good of intention and be sympathetic to mankind so that you are accepted.'

The Promised Messiah (as) wrote:

'What does God want from you but this that you treat all humanity with fairness? More than this do good to those who have never done good to you and more than this be compassionate to God's creatures as if they were your next of kin; as mothers are with their children... The ultimate degree of good is borne of natural instincts like those of a mother.' (Kashti e Nuh, p. 30 Ruhani Khaza'in, Vol 19)

We have had this level of teaching as regards sympathy and compassion and if we practice it then alone can we feel each other's pain. With the grace of God large majority of our Jama'at has this compassion as indeed Ahmadis should. We have these sentiments for all humanity and in greater degree for Muslims. Our grief is heart-felt over any cruelty perpetrated against Muslims. The atrocity committed in Pakistan is certainly very painful for us and any atrocity perpetrated against Muslims around the world is painful for us. Our pain is intensified when we call out to the world that the Messiah has come according to Divine promises. The Messiah who was to end wars and conflict and spread love and peace; listen to him! In spite of our calling out those who are known as religious leaders are the worst in enmity against us. In such situations lines of fairness and compassion are blurred, disorder takes place and the innocent are killed as indeed it is happening. If only those known as religious leaders understand this and rather than embroil the Ummah in sectarianism, they inculcate the teaching of Islam based on love and peace in them and try and dispel the misconceptions among non-Muslims that Islam is God forbid an extremist and violent religion. May God give them sense! Prayers should be said for Pakistan and other Muslim countries, may God bring peace to these countries and may the governments and the public recognise true Islamic values! May God also enable us to maintain good examples!

Non-violent Jihad

Harris Zafar

One of the most necessary conversations needed about Islam is on Jihad, as it continues to stand as one of the most misunderstood and manipulated Islamic concepts. For years, the staunchest critics of Islam have alleged that Islam is inherently a violent religion that teaches its followers to physically compel or intimidate others to become Muslim or otherwise face death. To build their case, they define Jihad as a holy war that Muslims are to wage against non-Muslims in order to gain power and dominion over others. And tragically, this misunderstanding and manipulation occurs among both Muslims and non-Muslims.

Let's be honest; there are indeed Muslims in this world with nothing less than a perverted understanding of Islam that is largely contaminated with political and social ambitions foreign to the teachings of Islam. For years, we have seen images of those identifying as Muslims burning flags, rioting, shouting, and celebrating a violent or deadly attack against "nonbelievers." There have been hate preachers for decades arguing that Jihad means to fight the nonbelievers, and depending on the preacher, there may be extra emphasis put on "the West" or on Jews.

Understandably, such acts and words attract media attention. Consequently, any act of terrorism committed at the hands of lunatics like ISIS, Al-Qaeda, Taliban, Boko Haram, etc. are assumed to be due to the teachings of Islam. Regretfully, such media reports are not balanced by the overwhelmingly larger number of Muslims living peaceful lives, helping take care of others through philanthropic endeavors, condemning acts of violence, rejecting all forms of terrorism, or calling for protection of freedoms, justice and equity. But the media cannot be blamed exclusively for the warped view of Islam that many non-Muslims now hold. The greater cause of that myopic representation of Islam comes from the lips and hands of Muslim extremists.

There have been many figures in the Muslim world who have called for violence and suicide attacks (or "martyrdom operations" as they call such acts) as a response to occupation of some land or territory. Although mostly a fight against occupation—and, thus, a geopolitical endeavor—they draw upon Islamic sources of knowledge in order to rigorously incite people to join their cause. By cherry picking and twisting these sources, such radicals have effectively hijacked Islam for their nefarious purposes. As such, Muslims have themselves to blame for allowing the profound and meaningful understanding of



Jihad to be obliterated over the centuries to somehow mean "holy war."

But truth be told, Islam abhors war and violence – whether it be against Muslims or non-Muslims. An honest study of the life of the Prophet Muhammad (sa) reveals that he only entertained the idea of physical force as a last resort in order to provide protection to people who were being physically brutalized and persecuted due to their faith. He hated the sword. But Islam offers practical guidance on how to handle a situation in which people are being physically attacked, abused, tortured or murdered due to their faith. When words are insufficient to stop such physical violence, Islam prescribes for that physical force to be met with an equitable counter force in order to protect the lives, property and dignity of the innocent.

This needs to be understood clearly – violence is forbidden to be used as a tool of oppression or power in Islam. Rather, Islam prescribes the necessity to come to the defense of those who are being attacked. The Quran (Islam's Holy Scripture) explains that Muslims are permitted to fight only in self-defense - only after an aggressor first wages war and that, too, specifically targeting the victims due to their faith. This is why the Quran states "Permission to fight is given to those against whom war is made, because they have been wronged" (1) This is a far cry from the modern day terrorists who ignore the wisdom of this

verse and, instead, fight people as a means of showing their strength and influence. Such acts are not protected by this verse of the Quran, which narrows the scope of the permission to fight only in the case of self-defense.

Then the very next verse further clarifies the purpose of such fighting. Even when fighting in self-defense is permitted, the Quran ensures that the fighting can only be for the cause of freedom of conscience and religion for all people – not just Muslims. The Quran states:

“if God had not repelled some people by means of others, cloisters and churches and synagogues and mosques, wherein the name of God is oft remembered, would surely have been destroyed” (2)

Thus, fighting is permitted in order to defend all houses of worship; not just mosques. Yet, as noble of an effort it is to protect the oppressed, the Prophet Muhammad (sa) referred to this as Jihad Asghar (i.e. “the lesser Jihad”), which is a matter of grave importance when one attempts to understand Islam. This lesser Jihad is an external, physical effort to halt the progress of those who are enemies of freedom of religion and conscience. It is the effort of fighting back against those who have already begun a physical assault on purely religious grounds.

If that is the lesser Jihad, what is the greater Jihad according to Islam? The Prophet Muhammad (sa) not only defined the greater Jihad directly, with the term Al-Jihad Al-Kabeer (i.e. “the great Jihad”) but also something even more important called Al-Jihad Al-Akbar (i.e. “the greatest Jihad”). This ranking of Jihad has been completely ignored by people around the world. It also strikes to the actual definition of the word Jihad – which is an infinitive noun describing the process of making an effort, endeavoring or struggling for a particular cause or purpose. So to understand the teachings of True Islam regarding Jihad, we cannot simply look at what Islam defines as the lesser or smaller Jihad. To truly understand, it is imperative that we study and understand what it classifies as the great Jihad and the greatest Jihad.

“The process of struggling or making a concerted effort to non-violently spread the word of God found in the Quran”



The great Jihad is used in order to describe something that is a highly revered effort for one to make. True Islam defines this great Jihad as the process of struggling or making a concerted effort to non-violently spread the word of God found in the Quran. This means to spread the true message of Islam through logic and reason. The Quran commands this when it states: “So obey not the disbelievers and strive against them by means of the Quran with a mighty striving.” (3). Other translations may use the word fight, stating to “fight against them by means of the Quran” but the meaning does not change. Clearly to fight “by means of the Quran” does not mean to physically strike someone with the Quran. The Jihad it refers to is a struggle to educate people on what the Quran truly teaches. It means to use the wisdom and teachings of the Quran as the best way to defend Islam and spread its teachings.

Thus, Islam puts greater emphasis on non-violence as the means to understand the Quran and spread the teachings of God through the use of very powerful weapons: speech and logic. In this day and age, Islam and its prophet are continuously under a barrage of verbal attacks and allegations. Islam’s teachings are not only twisted and misconstrued but are also falsified in order to paint the religion as backward, barbaric, and incompatible with the twenty-first century. The character of the Prophet Muhammad (sa) is frequently dragged through the mud, and he is unjustly abused by the harsh critics of Islam.

In response, Islam instructs Muslims to “fight” these attacks and allegations by preaching the true word of God. Far from riots, threats of violence or displays of anger, Islam calls its followers to peacefully use the commandments of the Quran as a sufficient tool to intelligently dispel these myths about the religion and advance the truth about Islam through sound arguments.

The example of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community is noteworthy here. The founder of this worldwide community, Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (as), made it clear that the Jihad he calls his followers toward is what he called the “Jihad bil Qalam” (i.e. “Jihad by the pen”). He understood the “Jihad by the sword” was a temporary condition when Muslims had no choice but to physically stop religious persecutors. He declared over 120 years ago that such conditions do not exist in the current age. As such, he called Muslims to peacefully use the pen in a rational and non-violent defense of Islam.

Then there is Al-Jihad Al-Akbar (i.e. “the greatest Jihad”). One may recognize the word “akbar” from the oft-repeated phrase “Allah-o-Akbar,” which means “Allah is the greatest.” The word “akbar” refers to something that is greater than anything else. Thus, what the Prophet Muhammad (sa) called Al-Jihad Al-Akbar has to be seen as the greatest and most revered type of struggle or effort (i.e. jihad).

And the Greatest Jihad is non-violent. It is defined as the process of striving within one’s own self to improve one’s character. It is the effort of purifying oneself by struggling or fighting against one’s evil tendencies and vices in order to curb any temptation toward immoral or sinful behavior. Because this struggle is an internal battle, it is the most difficult form of Jihad, which may explain why it is referred to as “the greatest”—for, the greater the effort, the greater should be the reward. Muslims are instructed to exert the greatest amount of effort on using the teachings of Islam to purify themselves and rid their souls of every indecency and vice. Muslims must continually strive to improve their moral and spiritual existence for as long as they live.

Since Islam teaches that every individual has an impact on society, it makes it our duty to keep society pure and safe by focusing on our own moral and spiritual condition. This is the ultimate form of non-violence – which focuses on one’s own condition as a way to improve the environment around us. These pristine teachings of Islam guide Muslims away from violence and towards introspection, rationality, and a genuine care for all people. These are the teachings that make terrorists cringe because it exposes their ideology for what it is: a selfish desire for power that exploits Islamic terms to deceive naïve Muslims into thinking such terrorist ideologies have some sort of a connection with Islam. Do not give in to their demands by arguing that their perversion of Islam is somehow authentic. What they hate the most, which would do the most damage to their recruitment efforts, is to expose how far divorced their ideology is to the teachings of True Islam. Because nothing can change the truth, which is that True Islam advocates for non-violent Jihad as the most important means to reach God.

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True Islam Rejects all Forms of Terrorism

Rabia Salim

The Qur'an, the holy book of Muslims declares,

“And if they incline towards peace, incline thou also towards it, and put thy trust in Allah. Surely, it is He who is All Hearing, All Knowing.” (1)

In this verse lies the principle of peace in Islam, the whole inclination of Muslims towards harmony, not terror. Whilst we see disorder in the world, which is caused by hatred between different tribes, groups, and nations, Islamophobia is also on the rise. Groups such as Islamic State of Iraq and Syria, commonly known as ISIS or ISIL or Daesh have turned people against Islam by creating an ideology they claim is within Islam, thus resulting in growing enmity against Muslims. However, I will bring forward some points that show that Islam totally rejects terrorism. The first is this very Qur'anic verse. What does it teach us about Islam? It tells us how Muslims are supposed to treat people who are attacking them. Islam always favors peacemaking. Muslims can fight only in self-defense when they are attacked and their religious rights are threatened. They are certainly not allowed to wage war with bombs, machetes, and missiles against unarmed civilians. Innocent civilians are not fair game, not even trees according to the Holy Prophet Muhammad (sa). In light of this core Muslim belief, let us rise above hate mongering and scapegoating that is causing massive rifts between humans and tearing apart groups of people.

The Ahmadi Muslims are Muslims who believe in the Promised Messiah and Mahdi, Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (as), whose advent was foretold in all religions. His coming was to revive Islam's true teachings and bring peace and light to the world. As a member of the Ahmadiyya Community, I would proudly like to share the True Islam campaign, an anti-terror campaign, launched in December 2015 to spread the message of true Islam. (2)

The True Islam campaign aims to provide all Americans a clear way to distinguish true Islam from extremism and to unify Muslim Americans on the correct understanding of Islam which Holy Prophet Muhammad (sa) taught. To this end, the following 11 points have been selected as key tenets of True Islam that differentiate it from extremism:

1. Wholly Rejects all forms of Terrorism;
2. Believes in Non-Violent Jihad of the self and of the pen;
3. Believes in the Equality education and empowerment of Women;
4. Advocates Freedom of conscience, religion and Speech;
5. Advocates for the Separation of Mosque and state;
6. Believes in Loyalty to your Country of residence;
7. Encompasses the Universal declaration of Human Rights;
8. Believes in All Verses of the Qur'an and forbids lying;
9. Recognizes No Religion can Monopolize salvation;
10. Believes in the Need for unified Muslim Leadership; and
11. Wholly rejects the concept of a Bloody Messiah.

The heart of the matter is that Islam condemns terrorism in all its forms. Opposite to the ideology adopted by ISIS who seek to spread disorder, we have a Khalifa (Caliph), Mirza Masroor Ahmad (aba) who is working tirelessly to enlighten the world with the message of peace. Under his guidance, in America, the True Islam campaign's goal is to lay out and eradicate any myths about Islam, and encourage the audience to carry true information and share it with their social circles. In this manner of reasonable dialogue, rather than allowing the extremists to flourish, we Ahmadi Muslims seek to strengthen national American security as well as worldwide security. We can focus on the real problems and not get sidetracked by hate speech and labels.

I feel that the first point of True Islam campaign is the most relevant to my topic of terrorism. I would like to now discuss this further. True Islam is a religion that “wholly rejects all forms of terrorism.” The teachings of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (sa) call for peace, not violence in response to violence. We are shown this by our Khalifa Mirza Masroor Ahmad (aba), the champion of world peace right now.

In his address in 2015 at the occasion of annual convention of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community of United Kingdom he said, "The rights that are being usurped in the world in this day and age is not the fault of religion. Instead, they are caused by people who deceive others in the name of worldly laws or religion. The injustices that are being carried out in wars in the world today are not caused by religion; rather they are being carried out by those who only seek materialistic gains. The immorality and shocking scenes of indecency in the name of freedom today are not part of religious teachings; ...to express one's power, prowess, and superiority is not the teaching of Allah the Almighty." (3)

Another example is from the Friday Sermon of Hazrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad's (aba) delivered in 2012; he quotes Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (as): "such individuals are not the well-wishers of their own nation as they create impediments in their path...those of wicked nature have no skill other than creating discord and conflict in a disorderly way...experience also bears witness that such offensive people meet a sorry end. The sense of honor of God ultimately comes to pass for his loved ones." (4) Hazrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad (aba) used this quote in light of a crude film made in California called the "Innocence of Muslims," depicting the Holy Prophet (sa) of Islam in an offensive light. He lied in order to get it produced; in short, his hypocritical attacks on a beautiful personage were baseless and malign.

In this Friday sermon Hazrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad (aba) is addressing people who attack Muslims and the Holy Prophet (sa). Clearly, he spoke out against mischief makers, and declares they are wrong, but his example, is the same example set by the Holy Prophet Muhammad (sa) – to react rationally, forgive first, and not degrade oneself to their level and not resort to terror through riots that damage property and harm people. This includes burning down embassies or murdering people as was done in the case of Charlie Hebdo, a French satirical weekly magazine.

Instead, true Khalifa of Islam, Hazrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad (aba), is showing the right course of action, by using the examples of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (as) and the Promised Messiah and Mahdi, Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (as). We are told to be prayerful, patient, and steadfast to the honorable and peaceful teachings of Islam. In the same sermon, Hazrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad (aba) said:

"Pure discourses do not require extremist measures to be taken nor do they require that vulgarity should be responded to with vulgarity. We should control our passions and resolve things peacefully." I am reminded of a saying of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (sa): "The strong is

is not he who defeats others in wrestling. The strong is he who has full control over himself during his anger" (5). What is happening in certain situations now is that the Muslims are rioting and acting irresponsibly like mere animals, whereas true Muslims are those that heed their prophet's advice and try to control their anger.

Anger will lead to greater mistrust and violence; it will not build bridges and solve the unrest in the world. Let's take the example of terrorist organizations around the world. On March 24, 2016 in Glasgow, England, a young male shopkeeper, Asad Shah, was stabbed to death by a so-called Muslim. An organization from Pakistan called "Tehrik-e-Khatme Nabuwat (Movement for the Finality of Prophethood)" posted a distasteful message online of congratulating the murderer. They view this act of killing someone as a victory for Muslims; because the shopkeeper was an Ahmadi Muslim (6). The criminal himself said that he killed Asad because he was disrespecting Islam, but surely the killer is the disgrace to Islam, as Islam forbids murdering anyone. This is what terrorism does to people's minds – it numbs and brainwashes them! In actual fact, looking at the teachings of Islam, there is no punishment for declaring that you are not a Muslim or what sect of Islam you belong to or follow. It is also worth noting that no one has the right to judge how anyone else practices their religion, let alone kill someone for being a different Muslim than you. It is laid out beautifully in a must read book "There is no punishment for apostasy in Islam" by the fourth Ahmadiyya Khalifa, Hazrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad (rh). (7)

There is certainly no need for us to blame an entire group of people rather we should focus on the perpetrators of crimes and deal with them based on their acts.

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Rejection of Bloody Messiah

Imam Rizwan Khan

Any interpretation of Hadith that contradicts the Holy Quran cannot be accepted because the Holy Quran is the perfect book. Some Muslims believe in the coming of a bloody Messiah who will force people to accept Islam and who will kill those who refuse. However, in interpreting Ahadith in a way that contradicts the Holy Quran, their belief in a bloody Messiah raises objection to the perfection of the Holy Quran and is therefore unacceptable.

One narration on which such a belief is founded is as follows. It is related that the Holy Prophet (sa) said: "There is no Prophet between me and him, that is, Jesus (sa). He will descend. When you see him, recognize him: a man of medium height, reddish fair, wearing two light yellow garments, looking as if drops were falling down from his head though it will not be wet. He will fight the people for the cause of Islam. He will break the cross, kill swine, and abolish Jizyah. Allah will perish all religions except Islam. He will destroy the Antichrist and will live on the earth for forty years and then he will die. The Muslims will pray over him." (1)

This Hadith is one which is used to justify the concept of a bloody Messiah, but to interpret this Hadith as a permission to force people to accept Islam is in clear contradiction of the Holy Quran. Allah Almighty has Himself established the limits on the authority of a Prophet of God in the Holy Quran,

"And the Messenger is only responsible for the clear conveying of the Message." (2)

"Admonish, therefore, for thou art but an admonisher; Thou hast no authority to compel them." (3)

"There should be no compulsion in religion. Surely, right has become distinct from wrong" (4)

To interpret a Hadith in a way that expands the authority of a Prophet beyond what Allah Almighty has permitted is an interpretation that contradicts the Holy Quran and cannot be accepted.

So what is the meaning of this Hadith? One interpretation is that it, like most prophecies, is metaphorical. The "killing of swine" does not mean literally exterminating the populations of boars and pigs that live in the world. Such an action would be an objection to the wisdom of Allah Almighty in having created these animals in the first place. Rather, swine refers to the immorality in sinful people. This meaning is found in a

Hadith wherein the Holy Prophet (sa) is narrated to have said, "Seeking knowledge is a duty upon every Muslim, and he who imparts knowledge to those who do not deserve it is like one who puts a necklace of jewels, pearls and gold around the neck of swine." (5) A similar metaphor is also found in the New Testament, where Jesus (as) is narrated to have said, "Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast your pearls before swine" (6) The killing of swine means that the Messiah will come to destroy the swine like characteristics found in people and, like every Prophet, usher in a spiritual revolution where people will turn to goodness and shun evil.



Similarly, "fighting people for the cause of Islam" does not necessarily mean that he will wage military war against non-Muslims. The Messiah can only fight those who attack Islam in the same way that they attack Islam. Allah Almighty says in the Holy Quran, "And if you desire to punish the oppressors, then punish them to the extent to which you have been wronged" (7)

If the enemies of Islam attack Muslims with the pen, then he can only fight back with the pen. No Muslim is permitted by Allah Almighty to wage military warfare against those

who have only attacked Islam ideologically, "And fight in the cause of Allah against those who fight against you, but do not transgress." (8)

These prophecies have been fulfilled with the advent of Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (as). He fought people for the cause of Islam by refuting false allegations made against Islam and establishing the perfection of its teachings. He broke the cross by dismantling the false doctrines of Christianity with powerful arguments. He killed the swine by establishing a spiritual revolution in the latter days with the establishment of Ahmadiyya Muslim Community (a Jama'at based on "khilafat 'ala minhajinnabuwwah). Like every Prophet before him, he (as) came in metaphorical fulfillment of prophecy as a spiritual reformer.

However, it is entirely possible that another Messiah may wage military warfare in the latter days. If a time comes when aggressive religious warfare is waged against Muslims, then warfare is permitted. The Holy Quran has only permitted fighting in self-defense, Allah Almighty says, "Permission to fight is given to those against whom war is made, because they have been wronged — and Allah indeed has power to help them — Those who have been driven out from their homes unjustly only because they said, 'Our Lord is Allah'" (9)

If at some point the conditions of Jihad of self-defense arise as described in the Holy Quran, then it is possible that a Messiah will wage such a Jihad of the sword. The Second Khalifa (ra) of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, wrote, "The founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement clearly wrote, 'The Holy Prophet (sa) said that Isa the Messiah will postpone wars.' From this we learn that whatever the Promised Messiah (as) has written about Jihad is only in the meaning of postponement, not in the meaning of permanent abrogation. The Promised Messiah (as) has given this same explanation concerning the temporary postponement of Jihad, that it is not I who am speaking of the postponement of Jihad, rather, the Holy Prophet (sa) said this. From one excerpt of his (as), it is clearly apparent that during a time in the future, it is possible that it will become necessary for Muslims to fight and the need for religious wars may arise. He (as) writes, "It is possible, entirely possible, that at some time such a Messiah comes on whom the apparent words of Ahadith can be fulfilled. I have not come with the sovereignty and kingdom of this world but I have come in the mantle of a dervish and in simplicity. When this is the reality, then what difficulty is there for clerics? It is possible that this desire of theirs also be fulfilled at some time."" (10)

In this regard, the Promised Messiah (as) himself prophesied the coming of such a Messiah at the end of the latter

days. He (as) wrote, "It has also been made apparent to me that after the passing of a period which will be a time of goodness, reformation, and prevalence of the unity of God, it is ordained that disorder, idolatry, and transgression will again make a return in the world. Some will destroy others like insects, ignorance will prevail, and again the worship of the Messiah will begin. The ignorance of making a created being into a God will greatly spread. In the last part of this last age, all of this disorder will spread from the Christian religion. Then, the spirit of the Messiah will again come into great agitation and will seek its descent in a Jalali (awe-inspiring) manner. Then, with his descent in a wrathful manifestation, that age will end. Then the end will come and the world will be wrapped up." (11)



Hazrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad (1928-2003)
Fourth Successor to the Promised Messiah

The Fourth Khalifa (rh) of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community explained this further, saying, "Jalali tells that he is something different from the other Messiahs before him because the concept of Messiah-hood is Jamali. So he is not like the old messiahs. He is something different, and that is only because a warner has to appear before the world is destroyed in the end. The Holy Prophet (sa) also tells us that people will become so evil that they will not accept anything, and there case would be completely gone out of hand. That would be the time when Allah would decide to finish mankind as such. So when such a time comes, there has to be a warner of some sort. So Messiah would appear as a Jalali one. Nobody is going to accept him because if he is to be followed and accepted then mankind would not be destroyed." (12)

It must be remembered here that it is possible for many Messiahs to come as the Promised Messiah's (as) Khulafa (Successors). The Promised Messiah (as) wrote, "I accept, and repeatedly say that not only one but more than ten thousand Messiahs can come, and it is possible that one come with apparent awe and prosperity." (13)

However, any Messiahs that come would come under the authority of the Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (as), they would not come outside of his dispensation. The Promised Messiah (as) said, "There is no room for a Messiah other than me to set foot after my age, if you reflect and do not transgress. I am the promised one of this age, and there is no age after me. O liars, in which age will you cause your imagined Messiah (as) to descent?" (14)

Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (as) was the advent of the Messiah as prophesied by the Holy Prophet (sa), both in its Jamali sense and its Jalali sense. The Promised Messiah (as) wrote, "I announce that I am the messenger of the awe-inspiring descent of the Promised Messiah (as), which is that until now was the merciful descent of the Promised Messiah. From now the awe-inspiring descent will begin. This means that before people were softly taught with mercy. However, now God Almighty will warn with his awe-inspiring and wrathful means, and it is to announce this matter that I have been commissioned." (15)

Any Messiah that comes after Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (as), whether Jamali or Jalali, would not be separate from his dispensation. The Fifth Khalifa (aba) of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community explained that if a Jalali Messiah appears at the end of the latter days, he would be one from among the Khulafa (Successors) of the Promised Messiah (as) (16, 17)

The concept of a bloody Messiah who will force people to convert to Islam is a false belief because it contradicts the Holy Quran. The Messiah of the latter days is prophesied as a spiritual reformer who comes during a time of spiritual darkness. If a Messiah will ever wage Jihad of the sword, it will only be within the Quranic definition of Jihad and in self-defense.

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Islam and Universal Declaration of Human Rights: A Brief Primer

Atif Munawar Mir

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted, by the General Assembly of the United Nations, on December 10, 1948 represents the culmination of humanity's efforts to establish the values of freedom, equality and justice across the globe. While this declaration is not law, the international community subscribes to the values found therein and nations strive to incorporate these values into their respective domestic laws. The Declaration contains thirty articles which cover the spectrum of human rights mandates including the condemnation of slavery, advocacy of freedom of choice in marriage, freedom of speech and humane methods of state punishment.

This article will answer the query of whether or not the values embodied in the Declaration coincide with Islamic values. There are rights in the Declaration that are consistent with Islamic values. Other rights found in the Declaration are not directly or explicitly addressed by earlier Islamic sources. Does this mean that Islam is at odds with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights? The answer is no.

Muslims believe that humanity was created by God and bestowed with countless, incredible blessings. In return man is required to fulfil his obligations towards God and towards his fellow men. Hence, in Islam, unlike modern legal systems, God's will is the basis of human rights, which is revealed in the Holy Quran. The Holy Quran deals extensively with legal, economic, political and social rights which are also found in the U.N. Declaration of Human Rights. Examples of these rights are illustrated in the verses below:

...whosoever killed a person — unless it be for killing a person or for creating disorder in the land — it shall be as if he had killed all mankind; and whoso gave life to one, it shall be as if he had given life to all mankind... (1)



Eleanor Roosevelt and United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights in Spanish text.

You shall worship nothing but Allah and show kindness to parents and to kindred and orphans and the poor, and speak to men kindly and observe Prayer, and pay the Zakat. (2)

O ye who believe! be strict in observing justice, and be witnesses for Allah, even though it be against yourselves or against parents and kindred. Whether he be rich or poor, Allah is more regardful of them both than you are. Therefore follow not low desires so that you may be able to act equitably. And if you conceal the truth or evade it, then remember that Allah is well aware of what you do. (3)

In these verses, the Holy Quran equates taking of one's life with the killing of all of humanity. These verses also uphold the economic and social rights of the disadvantaged and unequivocally command the establishment of a just legal system. A just legal system in which no one is above the law. These verses of the Holy Quran along with several others are consistent with human rights as outlined in the Declaration.

There are other rights outlined in the Declaration that are not explicitly outlined in the Holy Quran but can be derived from the life of the Holy Prophet (sa). For example, the Declaration includes the right to education, which is of utmost importance in Islam. The Holy Quran encourages pondering over

the creation of the heavens and the earth (4);

The Holy Prophet emphasized the importance of knowledge by saying "seek knowledge even if you have to go China." (5)

"The seeking of knowledge is obligatory upon every Muslim male and female." (6, 7)

Based on the above Quranic verse and Hadith, an Islamic state should allow equal access to education to all members of society regardless of their social status.

Some rights contained in the Declaration, such as the advocacy of democracy, freedom of speech and humane punishments, are believed by some to be antithetical to Islamic values. This criticism, often levelled against Islam, is not valid. Even some Muslims believe that Islam is against democracy and freedom of speech. One may argue however that Islam's silence on form of government allows for the choice of form of government to be determined by historical and/or social circumstances. As for freedom of speech, one may argue that Islam promotes this freedom but does so within the bounds of modesty. As Islam is a religion and not a political system, the value of freedom of speech needs to be tempered by moral values. Modesty, however, is not a blanket term. Rather it is defined and interpreted differently across different Muslim countries. Therefore, while freedom of speech is upheld by Islam, its practice varies across Muslim countries.

What about the cutting of a thief's hands? Does this defy the Declaration's mandate of humane punishment? Islamic viewpoint on this matter is apologetic and the punishment is enforced in extreme situations. However, is it suitable to arrive at a different type of punishment in accordance with the times?

Islam has equipped us with a tool to discuss these matters in a logical fashion. This tool is Ijtihad.

The following hadith explains the meaning and role of Ijtihad in an Islamic society.

On being appointed Governor of Yemen, Mu'adh was asked by the Holy Prophet as to which rule would he follow. Mu'adh replied, "The law of the Quran". "But if you do not find any direction therein", asked the Prophet. "Then I will act according to the Sunnah of the Prophet", replied Mu'adh. "But if you do not find any direction therein", he was asked again. "Then I will exercise my judgment (Ijtihad) and act on that", said Mu'adh. The Holy Prophet (sa) approved of this and prayed for Mu'adh. (8)

This hadith illustrates that how human judgment should be used in the matter of religion when the Holy Quran is silent on matters.

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Loyalty to one's Country

Seher Bhatti

"Today is Texas Muslim Capitol Day in Austin. I did leave an Israeli flag on the reception desk in my office with instructions to staff to ask representatives of the Muslim Community to renounce Islamic terrorist groups and publicly renounce allegiance to America and our laws." [1]

This Facebook post garnered nationwide attention to Republican Representative Molly White, inciting opposition and negative remarks to her page. While many may see this as offensive, what Ms. White said is not really out of line. Perhaps the way she conveyed it was not ideal, but you have to think, what was she asking? Only that Muslims claim loyalty to America and reject terrorist groups. Claim loyalty to the country you reside in. "Follow the law of the land," said Prophet Muhammad (saw). That doesn't go out of line with our beliefs, in fact, Molly White deserves our support.

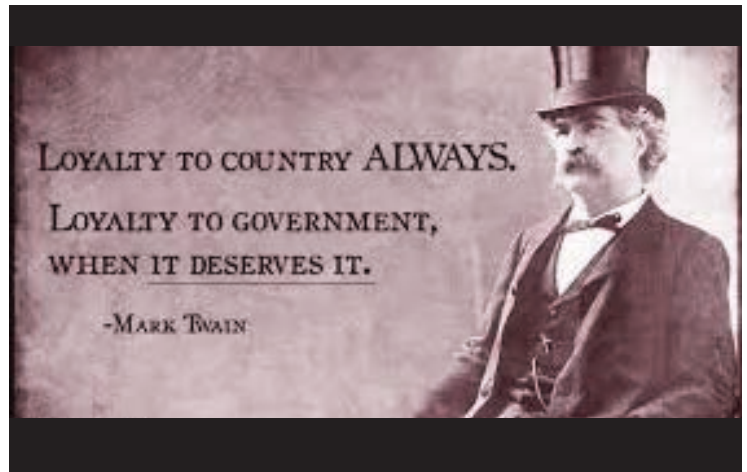
Obedience has been stressed on immensely in Islam. The very essence of it has been taught to us through Quran, Ahadith, and sayings of the Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (as), the Promised Messiah and Mahdi, plus his fifth Khalifa, Hazrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad (aba) constantly reminds us of these life lessons. In one of his sermons where Hazrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad (aba) quoted the following from the Holy Qur'ān:

"O ye who believe obey God and obey the Prophet and obey those in authority from among you." [2]

He explained that this verse serves as a principle for true believers. Emphasis is placed on obedience, however, the command is not just to obey, but to excel at it, whether it be to God, His Prophet, or those in authority, those who govern. We have freedom of religion in this country, therefore, whether those in authority are Muslim or non-Muslim, obedience to them is mandatory.

But what if the government's laws include something that goes against the commandment of God, like it did

in France when President Sarkozy allowed for a law that banned women to cover their heads. Then, as Hazrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad (aba) explains in his sermon, "the commandment of God and His Messenger takes precedence."



Going back to Representative Republican Molly White, one may perceive her request as contempt for Muslims and Islam, but these feelings that have surfaced among Americans have been stoked by the acts of a few misguided, disturbed individuals using religion as motive. What Americans have seen is an extreme love for Islam and its Prophet that unfortunately has been expressed violently, like the Charlie Hebdo attack when shooters stormed the building of the Charlie Hebdo publication office and killed several people. Or when the controversial novel, Jewel of Medina by Sherry Jones was published, and incited heavy opposition from mainstream Muslims, not to mention the threats made to the author. When bystanders see these reactions based on their attachment to Islam they question their loyalty to the country. They see that when attacks are made on their religion they cause disorder within their own surroundings without a regard for anything else. They see that if they really cared about their country they would have some regard for it and not act like barbarians. The global unrest in the Muslim world speaks volumes to these observers, therefore, they tend to view the entire Muslim population as a threat to society, and like Representative White, out of fear and apprehension they require proof of loyalty to our country.

If Islam was to be taken seriously by these so-called Muslims that act out of control, they would know that a principle rule of Islam is not to be hypocritical in words and actions. Jesus (as) also taught what the Holy Quran says in the above verse cited. When questioned about giving taxes he asked whose face was on the coin. The reply was Caesar. Then he said, give to Caesar what is Caesar's and give to God what is God's. The country in which we all reside in has given us the means to live peacefully with freedom. We go out to movies or to eat without a second thought, we go to work, to school, to social events, we are given freedoms to grow and build our lives in peace. To go against these freedoms is an act of being ungrateful. Ungratefulness does not sit well with God, and for that, His punishments are very severe. The Holy Prophet (sa) states: "he who does not thank people cannot be thankful to God." Sincerity and integrity are what's needed to form a relationship with loyalty. The best examples of loyalty are displayed by the Prophets of God, who in spite of every trial still obey their Lord. These Muslims that go out of control when their Prophet is ridiculed do not follow the proper etiquette of handling these situations. They do not know what it truly means to be a Muslim, because their ridiculed Prophet taught better. Prophets of God have remained steadfast during adversity, and acted cordially with everyone around them. When the British were occupying India Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (as) stated the following:

"It should be the duty of every Muslim to render true and sincere obedience to this government and offer heartfelt gratitude to such an authority and pray for their welfare." [3]

Not only are we instructed to follow the law of the land but also to pray for the government. Our religious responsibility is to love our homeland from the bottom of our hearts. There should not be a conflict of interest when it comes to love of country and love of God. We rely on the peace and security of this nation. Why jeopardize that with treachery and rebellion, after everything this country has done for us? The Holy Quran, Prophet Muhammad (sa), true Khalifa of Islam, Hazrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad (aba), they all remind us of our duty towards God. Keeping with the tranquility of the land from within our hearts will enable us to remain loyal to our country of residence.

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Separation of Mosque and State

Andleeb Shams Ahmed

"There is no compulsion in religion." (1) This verse from the Holy Qur'an is readily ignored when it comes to countries enforcing their laws and rules on their citizens. America is known to be the country which readily and historically separated itself from all other countries as the place to freely follow whichever and whatever religion while maintaining the separation of church and state. Although this is not always the case in America, it is still a far cry from the Islamic countries which do not enforce separation of mosque (church) and state. These countries have divided their natives and citizens as to what is necessarily the reason behind the non-existent separation of mosque and state by using the name of Sharia law as their excuse. Is Sharia law demanded by God in Islam and/or is it being used by these countries as God has declared what Sharia law is or is it a man-made decree of living? What is Sharia law and is it being misinterpreted by the Islamic politicians in their countries, which inevitably is destroying not only their country, but persecuting people from free worship of God in Islam and those who follow another religion? This article will attempt to show whether or not it is possible to have separation of mosque (church) and state. If according to some Muslims, Sharia law must be enforced, then mosque and state must go hand in hand.

As America was founded, the main reason for people leaving and ultimately, running away from England, was due to religious persecution and discrimination. Although most people were of the Christian faith in England, there were many different sects of Christianity which believed many different aspects of the religion, either in whole or specific parts of it. The Founding Fathers, or Pilgrims, were mostly Puritans. Because England was mostly controlled by the monarchy, there was no separation of church and state. The monarchy at the time was being controlled by King Arthur who was an Anglican Christian (who had beliefs closely related to another sect, Catholicism) and who was also considered to be the head of the church. Puritans believed to be better Christians themselves; however, were not allowed to rightfully practice their beliefs under the monarchy/head of the church. They were seeking the freedom and ability to practice their religion within the boundaries of their own culture. Thereby, they escaped to America which constitutionalized the right to religion of freedom and a complete separation of church and state. While most people in America are not persecuted or prohibited from practicing their own religion, or none at all, the same cannot be said about "Muslim" countries. (2)

Countries which don't believe in separation of mosque and state use Sharia law as their justification. What is Sharia Law? It is a very misunderstood, misconstrued, and misused concept. Every religion has Sharia. It is a way of living according to the commandments of God. Many Muslims want to live life with the correct "laws" of Islam, but these countries don't interpret or enforce the true meaning of Sharia. Sharia actually has five main branches: 1)- ritual worship; 2)- transactions and contracts; 3)- behavior and morals and manners; 4)- beliefs; and 4)- punishments. The two main branches in deciphering if mosque can be separate from state are ritual worship and punishments.

Proponents of Sharia law believe that life must be lead according to the teachings of the Holy Qur'an, which are direct directives from God. If a country is populated mostly by Muslims, then its leaders believe and dictate that the only way to live life is by following the teachings of the Holy Qur'an, thus, constituting Sharia law as the law of the land. As stated before, every country has citizens who follow not only many different religions, but even when the citizens are mostly Muslims, just like Christianity, there are multiple sects of Islam. Each sect has different interpretations of various verses of the Holy Qur'an. So how can a government of these countries decide which interpretation is correct and should be enforced on its people? Not only are there different interpretations between the sects of how to live life according to the Holy Qur'an (beliefs, prayers, etc.), but also the punishments involved when going



against the word of God. So once again, how can a government force certain laws claiming them to be Sharia Law when some people do not believe it to be just in Islam? These government leaders believe in Sharia and the Qur'an to be constitutional, but their interpretation of the Qur'an is questionable.

Those who claim that it is vital to keep mosque and state together argue that Islam is distinct from other religions like Christianity because Islamic states have a duty to implement Sharia and, therefore, require a government with joint religious and civil authority. Once again, the question arises that which interpretation of Sharia law or Qur'an is correct. Most Islamic countries (meaning countries that Muslims are in majority) do not separate religious and political authority. For example, in Saudi Arabia, the constitution declares that it is the state's duty to protect Islam and implement Sharia law. The result is a country where typically in one year there are close to 50 public beheadings (even for petty crimes such as possession of small amounts of marijuana). Women are not allowed to drive cars and government punishes styles of dress which they deem too liberal according to Islam. These harsh conditions lead to an infamous incident where school girls fled out of a burning school, yet couldn't cover their heads in the process of trying to save their lives. These girls were either stopped from leaving the burning building or were driven and forced (by the police) back in to the burning school to die because they went against the word of God by not covering themselves properly. (3) The state which claimed to follow Sharia law let God's own children die mainly due to their interpretation of God's commands and justified their actions in this way. While many (which includes obviously all the parents of the unfortunate 15 girls who died and over 50 that were injured) deemed this to not only be wrong and unjust, but completely un-Islamic. How could God want their daughters to die because they were not covered properly while running from fire and trying to save their lives? Yet, due to the fact that the government believed in Sharia law (according to their interpretation of it), these victims deserved the punishment of death and injury in the eyes of God.

In Iran which has implemented a theocratic regime since 1979, minorities such as members of Baha'i religion have been driven out from the country, while those who remain are victims of severe and cruel punishments. Adultery is still punishable by stoning and flogging is a common penalty for many religious "transgressions" which are determined by the political state and its sect. In 2004, a mentally handicapped 16-year old girl was hanged in public for "crimes against chastity." (4) Iraq's constitution states in Article 2 that "Islam is the official religion of the state and it is a fundamental source of legislation." The constitution goes on to provide that "no law that contradicts the established provisions of Islam shall be established." These are corrupt dictators or governments that

impose their own law and rules on people, claiming them to be Sharia law. Sharia law is not applied properly. These extremist views and guidelines enforced by these countries help and aid the Islamic extremists; ultimately, causing grave harm in their own countries and the world all over, especially in current times.

There is no country in this world that consists of only Muslims, no matter what sect they belong to. So what happens to those who do not follow their version of Islam? If a Christian lives in Iran or Saudi Arabia, does he have a right to believe in his faith? In Christianity, the main belief is that Jesus is the son of God. Now in Islam, this idea does not exist, yet Jesus is considered to be a Prophet of God. If Sharia law means God (according to the Holy Qur'an) wants one to abide by His words and worship and live life accordingly, then Christians cannot fall into this category. Their entire beings are anti-Islamic with this belief that Jesus is the son of God. With Sharia law, Christians are committing not just religious sins, but are breaking laws of the land. They are being unjustly punished because of their religious beliefs. Even if Muslims believe that Christians believe in something that is against what God has said or declared, Islam does not state that the land/government should punish these people for their beliefs. In fact, a true Muslim who truly believes in God would have enough faith in his heart that God will either show the truth to that person or decide Himself to punish that person (if He chooses to do so). By enforcing Sharia law, Muslim leaders are proclaiming to be almost equivalent to God. They are the judges and the enforcers.

Sharia is the law of Islam, the law for Muslims. The debate is how can this law be transformed into legislation for running a political government. If a Muslim country has a right to dictate its law (whether the true meaning of Sharia or their own interpretation of it), then by the same reasoning and logic, every other country with a specific religious majority of population has the exact same right to enact their own religious laws. With today's worldly turmoil, we have seen the devastation and murders of hundreds of Muslims by countries that believe that their religion trumps Islam. Yet, the outrage Muslims show when their fellow Muslims are treated this way is actually hypocritical. Why can countries led by Sharia law do the same to not only other religions, but to various sects within Islam? (5) Why the outcry for fellow Muslims in other countries, but not their own? And if a Muslim's life must be lived by Sharia law and the government must enforce it, what does that mean for Muslims living in a country where they are minorities? If people worship God according to Islam in America, does it mean that their faith is false because they are not bound by Sharia law?

The Holy Prophet of Islam, Muhammad (sa) himself never imposed Sharia or Islamic law. In Medina, Jews and other

religious people had not only accepted him as a religious leader, but as a political leader as well. It is worth noting that he was the bearer of the Islamic law and he honored the Jewish laws as well. Obviously every religion has its own set of beliefs. People of Medina held him in such high regard as a political leader, they would bring disputes to him because they trusted his judgment. Every time he was approached, without fail, he would ask first: "Would you like your dispute to be settled according to the Jewish law or according to the Islamic law or according to the arbitration." (6) He upheld the word of God of there being "no compulsion in religion." And in Islam, he is the person who is the best example of a perfect Muslim who followed true Sharia law.

Some believe it is impossible to practice Islam without a community being governed by Sharia law. God provided guidance for all aspects of a Muslim's life including societal organizations, foreign policies, and inheritance laws, etc. Sharia law established in these countries today ultimately is a man-made, man-interpreted, and antithesis of the words of God. Separation of mosque and state is necessary for all Muslims to live. No government should enforce the rules of Islam in constitutions or laws. No matter whether it is because of the various interpretations or wrong understanding of the Holy Qur'an or any other reason; let God be the Judge and Punisher of wrongdoers. In simple words...there is no compulsion in religion.

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Demystifying Freedom of Speech from the Holy Quran

Zia H Shah, MD

As I write this article in May of 2016, recently two very dramatic events have occurred in the domain of freedom of speech or shall we say lack thereof, within the last couple of months.

In Bangladesh, Nazimuddin Samad, 28, who had been on a hit list of 84 bloggers drawn up by Islamists in Bangladesh, was hacked to death and then shot. Last year, suspected militants hacked to death at least four atheist bloggers and a secular publisher in one of a series of targeted killings. (1)

In Glasgow, UK, the man accused of murdering Glasgow shopkeeper Asad Shah has issued a statement, saying he carried out the killing because he believed Mr. Shah had “disrespected” Islam. Tanveer Ahmed, 32, from Bradford, is accused of killing Mr. Shah outside his shop in Glasgow. In the statement he denied the incident had anything to do with Christianity.

Mr. Ahmed claimed Asad Shah had “disrespected” Islam. The shopkeeper, an Ahmadi Muslim, who had moved from Pakistan to Glasgow almost 20 years ago, was found with serious injuries outside his shop on Minard Road in Shawlands on the 24th of March. He was pronounced dead in hospital. Mr. Shah was killed just hours after he posted an Easter message on Facebook, wishing his Christian customers a happy Easter. (2)

Such violence in the name of Islam is complete antithesis of what Islam truly stands for.

Those of us, who have seen the Message movie, about the life of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (sa), would recall a scene, when the Companions of the Prophet are saying the creed of Islam or Kalimah in Ka’bah. The non-Muslim Meccans start throwing stones at them and start beating them.

The character of Hamza, who is not a Muslim yet, being played by Anthony Quinn, enters the courtyard of Ka’ba and says tauntingly to Abu Jahal, one of the main leaders of the Meccans, “He is the bravest man in the desert, when he meets unarmed men!”

Abu Jahal retorts, “Muhammad is a liar.”

Hamza responds, “Where the lie is and where the truth is, when it has not been spoken yet. You do not let him speak?”



Early Muslims were for free speech and their opponents, the Meccans for coercion and taking away the freedom of speech of the early Muslims.

Free Speech is certainly a tool of the believers and it is mentioned as such several times in the Holy Qur’an. For example, “And let there be among you a body of men who should invite to goodness, and enjoin equity and forbid evil. And it is they who shall prosper.” (3) And, “And the believers, men and women, are friends one of another. They enjoin good and forbid evil and observe Prayer and pay the Zakat.” (4)

The Holy Qur'an issues a challenge to the non-believers to produce its equivalent, if they do not esteem it to be word of All Knowing God: "And if you are in doubt as to what We (Allah) have sent down to Our servant (Muhammad), then produce a Chapter like it, and call upon your helpers besides Allah, if you are truthful." (5)

The Qur'anic challenge is indeed freedom of speech for the non-believers.

The Holy Qur'an repeats this challenge with slight variation several times:

- Do they say, "He has forged it?" Say, "Bring then a Surah (chapter) like unto it, and call for help on all you can besides Allah, if you are truthful." (6)
- Do they say, "He has forged it?" Say, "Then bring ten chapters like it, forged, and call on whom you can besides Allah, if you are truthful." (7)
- Say, "If mankind and the Jinn gathered together to produce the like of this Qur'an, they could not produce the like thereof, even though they should help one another." (8)

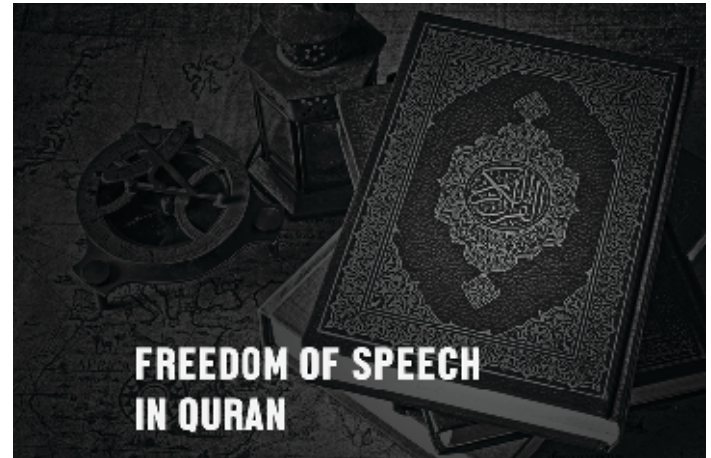
The Holy Qur'an is inviting non-believers to bring their proofs and argue against every Qur'anic proposition. If this is not freedom of speech, I do not know what is?

The Qur'anic freedom is not only for the likeminded or the yes men, but for the contrarians or those who beg to differ. For example, the Qur'an says: "And the Jews and the Christians say, 'None shall ever enter Heaven unless he be a Jew or a Christian.' These are their vain desires. Say, 'Produce your proof, if you are truthful.'" (9)

Many a non-Muslim philosophers have expressed similar sentiments, for example, Noam Chomsky says, "If we do not believe in the freedom of expression for the people we despise, we don't believe in it at all." French philosopher François-Marie Arouet (1694 – 1778), known by his pseudonym Voltaire had to say, "I do not agree with what you have to say, but I will defend to the death your right to say it." (10)

Indeed, the Islamic concept of freedom of speech is a real choice and not a deceptive ploy, like the third President of Uganda, Idi Amin Dada (1923-2003) once famously threatened, "There is freedom of speech, but I cannot guarantee freedom after speech." (11)

Despite there being freedom in the domain of ideas, there is no freedom to slander others or violate the honor of others, in Islam: "Indeed, those who accuse chaste, unwary, believing women are cursed in this world and the Hereafter. And for them is a grievous chastisement." (12)



The Holy Qur'an even legislates against slander: "And those who slander chaste women but bring not four witnesses — flog them with eighty stripes, and never admit their evidence thereafter, and it is they that are the transgressors." (13)

Yet in the domain of religion and ideas, Allah allows complete freedom of speech.

The Qur'an suggests that it has been a tradition with the non-believers that they mock the Prophets of God, yet the Qur'an does not prescribe any worldly punishment for these blasphemers: "And there never came to them any Messenger but they mocked at him. Thus do We cause this habit of mocking to enter into the hearts of the sinful people; they believe not therein, though the example of the former peoples has gone before them." (14)

The Holy Qur'an even describes how the hypocrites of Medina mocked the Holy Prophet Muhammad (sa), yet does not suggest any worldly punishment for the offenders: "The hypocrites say, 'If we return to Medina, the one most honorable will surely drive out the one meanest (implying Muhammad (sa)) from there;' while true honor belongs to Allah, His Messenger and the believers; but the hypocrites know not." (15)

Without freedom of speech there can be no learning or progress and no development in human societies. No wonder the Qur'an names one of its 114 chapters, Chapter 68 (Al-Qalam) after pen and suggests that mankind has been educated through the medium of writing. In this chapter the Qur'an opens up the debate with non-believers, once again and invites them to present their evidence, for their claims. (16)

The Founding Fathers of our great country USA, fully understood the benefits of freedom of speech in a free and progressive society. They gave us a constitution, which has now stood the test of time for more than two centuries.

Here, I would like to quote from Benjamin Franklin (1706 – 1790), who was one of the Founding Fathers. A renowned polymath, Franklin was a leading author, publisher, political theorist, politician, freemason, postmaster, scientist, inventor, civic activist, statesman, and diplomat. He said: "Freedom of speech is a principal pillar of free government; when this support is taken away, the constitution of a free society is dissolved and tyranny is erected on its ruin." On another occasion he said: "Without freedom of thought there can be no such thing as wisdom and no such thing as public liberty without freedom of speech." (17)

The European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) is an international treaty to protect human rights and fundamental freedoms in Europe. Drafted in 1950 by the then newly formed Council of Europe, the convention entered into force on 3 September 1953. All member states in the European Union are party to the Convention and new members are expected to ratify the convention at the earliest opportunity. ECHR encompasses the complexity of debate on the issue of freedom of speech and its limitations.

Article 10 provides the right to freedom of expression, subject to certain restrictions that are "in accordance with law" and "necessary in a democratic society." This right includes the freedom to hold opinions, and to receive and impart information and ideas, but allows restrictions for the following seven exceptions:

1. Interests of national security
2. Territorial integrity or public safety
3. Prevention of disorder or crime
4. Protection of health or morals
5. Protection of the reputation or the rights of others
6. Preventing the disclosure of information received in confidence
7. Maintaining the authority and impartiality of the judiciary

So, how do we create a balance between these exceptions and the cherished principles of freedom of speech? The key point to note is that these exceptions are to be exercised only by a sovereign state that believes in secularism, where each individual has equal stake and representation, otherwise these exceptions will become tools to enforce a chosen state religion or interest of one group of individuals at the expense of others.

In summary, there is total freedom of speech in the matters of religion or the sphere of 'man relation to God,' otherwise it will mount to taking away the religious freedom of some.

When it comes to 'man relation to man' or the domain of human rights, any sovereign state can enforce some limitations to ensure smooth human interaction and human rights, as long as it does it with wisdom and with justice for all, rather than only for the chosen elite.



Dr. Zia Shah is the Chief Editor of the Muslim Times with 39,000 followers in Twitter; has authored 400 articles on Religion, Secularism and Religion and Science.

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Equality of Women in Islam

Mansura Bashir Minhas

Islam is a practical religion and it specifies the code of conduct for one's life. It is a way of life that was prescribed more than 1400 years ago. Islam is distinctive because its source of guidance, the Holy Quran, remains preserved in the exact format as was revealed to the Prophet Muhammad (sa). Together with the Holy Quran, the Hadith and Sunnah constitute the Islamic law. The practices and sayings of the Prophet Muhammad (sa) are an integral component of Islamic jurisprudence.

The life of the Prophet Muhammad (sa) is most well documented amongst all Prophets preceding him. Details of his life have been cataloged and are a core component of Islamic faith. Muslims are fortunate to have the example of their beloved Prophet available as it serves as a guidepost in all aspects of life, no matter how small they might be.

Islam promotes equality of women in all spheres of life. It guarantees them spiritual equality, helps them achieve socioeconomic parity with men, safeguards their basic human rights and allows them equal opportunities to education.

Spiritual Equality

The purpose of life for every Muslim is to win the pleasure of Allah. Attaining nearness to Allah is the ultimate aspiration of every Muslim man and woman. The Holy Quran gives examples of two women as role models of piety. By choosing women as role models, Allah validates their spiritual equality to men.

Regarding Hazrat Maryam, mother of Jesus (as), the Holy Quran says:

And remember when the angels said: O Mary, Allah has chosen thee and purified thee and chosen thee above the women of all peoples. (1)

Asiya, the wife of Pharaoh is mentioned in the Holy Quran as an example of steadfastness:

And Allah sets forth for those who believe the example of the wife of the wife of Pharaoh when she said, 'My Lord! build for me a house with Thee in the Garden, and deliver me from Pharaoh and his work, and deliver me from the wrongdoing people. (2)

Allah has opened the doors of spiritual equality for all women. There are many verses of the Holy Quran that testify to the equality of women in the spiritual realm.

"For men who submit themselves wholly to Allah, and women who submit themselves wholly to Him and men who believe and women who believe, and men who obey Allah and women who obey Him, and men who are truthful and women who are truthful, and men who are steadfast and women who are steadfast, and men who are humble and women who are humble, and men who give alms and women who give alms, and men who fast and women who fast, and men who guard their chastity and women who guard their chastity, and men who remember Allah much and women who remember Him, Allah has prepared forgiveness and a great reward." (3)

"Allah will turn in mercy to believing men and believing women; Allah is Most Forgiving, Ever Merciful." (4)

"Their Lord would answer their supplication. I will not suffer the work of any worker from among you, male or female, to perish. You are spiritually akin one to another." (5)

Socioeconomic autonomy

Prior to the advent of Islam, women were treated as the property of men. They lacked autonomy and their free will was curbed. They were denied basic human rights and most were treated as chattel of their husbands,

fathers or sons who made decision about them.

In the earliest days of Islam, women were the first to gravitate towards its message due to the egalitarian spirit embodied therein. For women, the rights that were guaranteed to them were unparalleled. They could now claim their right to inheritance in family property and they could also own property. They had a free choice in marriage and could also initiate a divorce. These progressive ideas were unheard of in sixth century Arabia.

In fact, Islamic teachings with regard to women set a standard that still remains elusive to the modern day women. In the 21st century, women are still struggling to achieve financial parity with men. It is alarming that women are paid 79 cents to a dollar as compared to men for an equal job. This is a grave injustice and the fact that 'Equal Pay for Equal Work' is the top-most political priority for women in these times, alludes to the inability of the Feminist revolution to achieve a basic parity with men.

In marriage, a Muslim woman is guaranteed a financial security commensurate with her financial worth. The dowry places the onus of financial responsibility upon men at the time of marriage. Men are made responsible for providing for women. Concurrently, women are not barred from pursuing their aspirations and can expand their role beyond the homemaking realm. Women who work outside the home are not obliged to share their earnings with their husbands. Their husbands remain their prime custodians and must provide for them. However, if a husband and wife are in mutual consent, they can share their earnings.

Knowledge

The Holy Prophet Muhammad (sa) urged all Muslims to acquire knowledge and deemed it an obligation upon them. Thus, education is encouraged for Muslim women as much as Muslim men.

"Seeking knowledge is an obligation upon every Muslim" (6)

Thus, if there are some Muslim groups or governments that disallow education of girls, they are violating the commandments of the Prophet Muhammad (sa).

Marital relationship

The Holy Prophet Muhammad (sa) said:

"The world is but a provision and the best provision of the world is a good woman". (7)

Islamic teachings are cogent and practical. They take into account the natural differences between men and women and thus assign them responsibilities accordingly. Men and women have equal but different roles. Men have been made guardians over women. They bear a greater financial responsibility compared to women who have been made the primary caregivers at home and in doing so they perfectly complement their husbands. Thus, roles of men and women - when performed in their desired and natural dispositions perfectly complement each other and there is no competition whatsoever.

However, there is no restriction on women working outside the home as long as the couple is in mutual consent and a woman is not negligent of her primary responsibility of caregiving for her home and children.



Treatment of daughters

The Holy Prophet Muhammad (sa) had four daughters and he loved them dearly. He said:

“He who brings up two daughters through their childhood will appear on the Day of Judgment attached to me like the two fingers of a hand”. (8)

Muslim women as role models

Islamic history has many Muslim women heroes. Most importantly, two women from the time of the Prophet Muhammad (sa) him serve as shining examples of female empowerment.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad’s (sa) first wife Khadija (ra) was a successful entrepreneur when she married him. She initiated the proposal of marriage. Her life is a remarkable tribute to female empowerment and it remains unparalleled even today. She was the trustworthy companion and confidante of the Prophet Muhammad (sa) in his early days as she lent her unconditional support to him. Khadija (ra) was the first Muslim to pay heed to the call towards Islam.

These examples from the Holy Prophet Muhammad’s (sa) life set the framework and provide guidance for Muslim women in all spheres of life. His marriage to an older woman and her unconditional support for his cause are testament to the ideal marital relationship that remains exemplary for generations to come.

Another brilliant example of female empowerment from the life of the Prophet Muhammad (sa) is his wife, Ayesha (ra) who exemplifies women’s participation in scholarship, political life and public sphere. Under the Prophet Muhammad’s (sa) guidance she became the most astute scholar of Islam. Prophet Muhammad (sa) urged his followers to learn the faith from Ayesha (ra).

In the 21st century, when Saudi Arabia disallows women from driving cars, it has nothing to do with Islam. Muslims know that their prophet’s wife Ayesha (ra) rode camels on that very land where the Saudi Arabian government has banned from women driving.

Conclusion

Despite the progress of the women liberation movements of the last century, gender equality remains in flux. Women worldwide are striving for equality in all realms of life.

Modern day women are still not allowed to make their own decisions; they are paid less for equal work and work place discrimination, sexism and harassment are rampant.

In Japan, which is a developed country, one-third of women are sexually harassed at work. Statistics are equally glaring in other developed economies and women abuse is not limited to poor and developing countries. The West blames the Muslim countries for usurping the basic human rights of women. However, its track record in this regard remains less than perfect.

Women all over the world continue to be held to different standards compared to men. Striving for women’s equality is a universal issue and it is not confined to one country or region.

Fourteen hundred years ago Islam laid down the ideal framework. The whole world – Muslims and non-Muslims alike - need to catch up to those ideals to ensure perfect equality for women

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The Need for Unified Muslim Leadership

Labeeb Ahmad

It is a common law that no nation can prosper without unity. With no decisive authority, there is far too much room for dissent, ultimately leading to destruction. For the Muslim world, there is no reason why this principle should not also apply. This is precisely why the Almighty and Wise God has ordained the institution of Khilafat, so that the theological truths, spiritual fire, and moral righteousness of the revolution brought about by the Holy Prophet Muhammad (sa) is maintained. Furthermore, this divinely guided successor is able to protect his community against false innovations and ideas creep in the faith. Also, as times change, new moral situations and challenges cause for new tests or the community. A final authority is needed to judge on these issues, so that the believers may stay on the right path under his leadership and guidance.

Most importantly, Almighty God has made a clear injunction in the Holy Qur'an that it is incumbent for the Muslims to make sure they remain attached to His man on earth when He says: "And hold fast, all together, by the rope of Allah and be not divided; and remember the favor of Allah which He bestowed upon you when you were enemies and He united your hearts in love, so that by His grace you became as brothers; and you were on the brink of a pit of fire and He saved you from it. Thus does Allah explain to you His commandments that you may be guided." (1) What is this rope? Among other meanings, it also points to the divine connection of the Khalifa, and therefore, Muslims should always keep themselves bound by this link.

Interestingly, if one asks anybody well-versed in matters of the Muslim World and the Islamic presence in our contemporary world what is the biggest problem that faces Muslims in this era? they will tell you it is the lack of unified Muslim leadership. Muslims often face conflicting and contradicting messages from various leaders, with some claiming that Islam is built upon justice and peace, others claiming that Islam teaches a violent jihad, death for apostasy, and the advent of a future bloody messiah,

and many are attempting to reconcile and preach both diametrically opposite philosophies together. It is these same Imams and clerics who cause great enmity and hatred to be built up in the hearts of their congregation not just for other peoples, groups, and nations, but also among various Muslim sects. Although the issue of wrongful religious leaders has been consistent occurrence throughout the history of religion, it is now in the latter days that Muslims need to be especially cognizant of their leaders in light of the word of our beloved prophet, the Holy Prophet Muhammad (sa), who said, "Their divines will be the worst people under the heaven and strife will issue from and avert to them." (2)

It is in this environment that Sheikh Abdul Aziz, the Grand Mufti of Saudi Arabia, the so-called top authority of Sunni religious law, has called for the destruction of all Christian churches on the Arabian Peninsula, an idea that is so clearly against the verses of the Qur'an and sayings of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (sa). (3) It is under these shameful conditions, that Imam Muhammed Asim Hussain of the Manchester Central Mosque, a popular religious figure in England who has hundreds of thousands followers, so inexcusably and repugnantly praised the murderer Mumtaz Qadri. While Qadri assassinated Punjab province's Governor Salmaan Taseer for speaking out against the country's draconian and inhumane blasphemy laws as well as killing of innocent Christians, he was praised by Hussain, who claimed Salmaan Taseer's killer was, "wrongfully executed and martyred in the way of Allah." (4) Granted, there are many Muslim leaders who have nothing to do with the ideas of men like these, but this is simply sugar-coating a problem dominating the obstacles to inter-faith peace and harmony. Statements and fatwas like these from supposedly top religious authorities occur quite too often, and have resulted in the disgraceful downfall of the true name of Islam. It has caused for the advent of the extremism and terrorism, rooted in an utmost false perverted version of Islam that so violently threatens the peace and sanctity of not simply the Western world, but also of the Muslim world.



British politician Maajid Nawaz says regarding violent killings of Islamic extremists that, "This thirst for an inquisition is not found only among extremist groups, nor limited to these key figures in the UK's largest mosques...also present to worrying levels in the wider (Muslim) community." (5) It truly is a terrible reality that far too many Muslims hold views that may be considered extreme. Yet this has not been the product of Muslims keenly understanding the authentic tenets of Islam, but of the misguidance of Imams who have adopted wrong understandings of the faith due to their ignorance, which is not necessarily tied with terrorist organizations.

Moreover, journalists, politicians, and Islamaphobes constantly ask regarding who exactly speaks for the Muslims. Many young Muslims throughout the world are also often concerned about the credibility of their leaders, whether or not they are preaching that true Islam is peaceful. (6)

When looking at these current dilemmas, it is clear that that the Muslims will only be united unless there is a clear establishment of divine guidance. Why must this be? The answer to this question can be found in the profound words of Hazrat Usman Bin Affan (ra), the third Khalifa of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (sa), who said to the early rebellious mutineers, "If you succeed in killing me, you shall never be able to remain united, nor able to offer your Prayers or face the enemy in unity." (7) Therefore, without Khilafat, the Muslims are clearly not able to stay united and holding to the rope of Allah. Also, it is worth noting that when even two Muslims are gathered for Prayer, they are supposed to choose one as an Imam to lead the Prayer. If such leadership is needed for events like these among Muslims, then does it not make logical sense that a leader is need for the whole Muslim Community?

However, since the advent of Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian (as), the Imam Mahdi and Promised Messiah, the majority of the Muslim World has rejected his claim, branding him as a disbeliever and an apostate, a declaration that clerics of different sects so impetuously and fiercely pronounce on one

another. This is all being done in clear ignorance of the Prophet Muhammad (sa) words, "Then once again Khilafat would emerge on the precept of prophethood." (8) The Muslim World has been completely devoid of the vast bounties and blessings that have also continued with the successors (Khulafa) of Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian (as). While the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community has reformed Islam, winning the hearts of tens of millions since its inception in 1889, the rest the Muslim Community will continuously try to unite, but as it has been seen from all their conferences and unions, they are ultimately futile. Yet, this has not been done because of changing the original teachings of Islam, unlike countless other clerics who malign them in order to fit the need of their own secular agendas. This is solely because members of the Ahmadiyya Community have become true brothers in mutual coherence, pledging obedience, and paying selfless heed to the Khalifa that is appointed over them, while so many other Muslim organizations are wasting time defaming each other because of the lack of righteousness of their leaders.



We see that in the past two centuries or more, constant strife, turmoil, and tensions of magnanimous proportions rages on within the Muslim world. There is absolutely no trace of the widespread brotherhood that the Holy Prophet Muhammad (sa) envisioned for his community, such as "Learn that every Muslim is a brother to every Muslim and that the Muslims constitute one brotherhood." Are these traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (sa) buried under the piles of hard heartedness of Muslim Imams and clerics? Are they just not relevant to their visions of Islamic Shariah? Do they not ponder that if apparently Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (as) is false, where is the leadership that has been lost since the time of the Righteously-Guided Successors of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (sa), which has now resulted in so many disparaging versions of what true Islam actually is? In this chaos of varying Islamic opinions, the powerful bond of unity can never be created, as only true knowledge comes from God. Although, it can be argued that the root of many conflicts have revolved around the clash of political and economic controversies, it is no doubt that religion has played a significant role, which can be most notably seen in the Sunni-Shia conflict. One can only imagine in what shape the Muslim World be in if they accepted their Divine Messiah and subsequently payed heed to his teachings and that of his Successors.

Ultimately, the unified Muslim leadership that is so desperately needed in our world today will not be brought about by the efforts of any man with his/her worldly means. Instead, it will be established through the acceptance of Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (as) as the Imam of this day and age, and as of right now, by taking the pledge of allegiance to his fifth successor, Hazrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad (aba).

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No Verse of the Holy Qur'an is Abrogated

Hassan Faiyaz Khan

Introduction

Growing up an Ahmadi can sometimes shield one from the most outrageous of religious doctrines. It was a shock to me when I heard from Muslim friends in school that the Qur'an contains abrogated verses. Why would mainstream Muslims, who profess that the Holy Qur'an is a perfect book from God, say that it contained verse that could not be trusted?

Such disregard for logic and reasoning has led to disastrous consequences for Muslims. It has made the Holy Book of Muslims a target of ridicule by non-Muslims. Within Islam it has created extreme sectarian divide. And more recently, it has even led terrorist organizations like Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) to commit terrible crimes in the name of Islam because they conveniently consider the peaceful teachings of the Holy Qur'an as abrogated. It was indeed such erroneous beliefs among Muslims that begged for a divinely appointed reformer, Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (as) of Qadian, the Promised Messiah and Mahdi.

This article covers the origins and development of the doctrine of abrogation, or "Naskh" (cancellation, annulment, repeal, abrogation) as it is commonly known among Islamic scholars. It ends with recounting the services of the Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (as) in resolving this matter once and for all.

Preservation of the Holy Qur'an

Before anything, it must be clear that the Holy Prophet (sa) and his Companions (ra) never made any distinction between the verses of the Holy Qur'an. As soon as the Holy Prophet (sa) received any revelation, his Companions (ra) memorized and transcribed the verses. The Holy Prophet (sa) also recited the complete Qur'an in front of them regularly until his death. Thus, the entire Qur'an was dictated into writing by the Holy Prophet (sa) himself. After the Holy Prophet (sa) passed away, his first successor Hadrat Abu Bakr (ra) had all the verses of the Holy Qur'an collected and preserved in the form of a single book. No verse was excluded during this process.

Had some verses of the Holy Qur'an been abrogated, the Holy Prophet (sa) and his Companions would not have kept reciting and writing these verses. Such verses would have easily been omitted. But it was God's decree that no verse of the Holy Qur'an is ever omitted from the recitation or printing even after 15 centuries. This is true even though abrogation has been a common belief among Muslims for centuries.

Origins of Abrogation Theory

Mention of abrogation of Qur'anic verses began to appear in scholarly books as early as 8th and 9th centuries AD. Sahih Al-Bukhari includes traditions according to which Companions of the Holy Prophet (sa) argued that verse "The prescribed fasting is for a fixed number of days, but whoso among you is sick or is on a journey shall fast the same number of other days; and for those who are able to fast only with great difficulty is an expiation — the feeding of a poor man" (2) about feeding the poor in place of fasting was abrogated in favor of the verse "The month of Ramadan is that in which the Qur'an was sent down as a guidance for mankind with clear proofs of guidance and discrimination. Therefore, whosoever of you is present at home in this month, let him fast therein. But whoso is sick or is on a journey, shall fast the same number of other days. Allah desires to give you facility and He desires not hardship for you, and that you may complete the number, and that you may exalt Allah for His having guided you and that you may be grateful." (3) which require making up the missed days by fasting at a later time.

The teachers of the Shafi and Hanafi Islamic schools of thought also threw their weight behind abrogation. They believed that this was necessary for resolving apparent contradictions within Qur'an, Sunnah, and Hadith. They argued that such abrogation was in line with the teachings of the Holy Qur'an itself as in: "Whatever Sign We abrogate or cause to be forgotten, We bring one better than that or the like thereof" (4)

"And when We bring one Sign in place of another" (5)

Some less influential scholars of the time rejected abrogation and pointed out that the use of the word "sign" in these verses either stands for pre-Qur'anic scripture (e.g., the Gospel, the Torah, and the Scrolls of David) or for Divine punishment. Mu'tazalite scholars, for example, firmly held the belief that the Holy Qur'an, which was the Word of God, is perfect and cannot contain contradictions. This sect did not stay around for long however.

Abrogation became a Discipline

By 10th century AD, abrogation had become a discipline in the minds of Muslim scholars. Whole books were dedicated to the subject, new terminology was invented and rules for determining the abrogated verses were laid out. Qur'anic teachers who

failed to demonstrate a certain level of “proficiency” in the subject of abrogation were reprimanded by authorities.

Generally, three categories of abrogation were defined:

First, verses which continue to be recited in the Qur’an but their teachings have been superseded. One verse that belongs to this category is “There is no compulsion in religion.” (6) It was argued that the teaching of this verse was superseded by the verse “kill the idolaters.” (7)

Second, verses which were expunged from the recited Qur’an but their commandments still remain. For example, it was believed that the Qur’an during the lifetime of Holy Prophet (sa) used to contain a verse prescribing stoning of adulterers. This verse was formally removed from the Qur’an by the decree of Allah but its teaching remains and overrules every other teaching on this topic in the Holy Qur’an.

Third, verses which have been removed from the recited Qur’an and their teachings have been cancelled as well. For example, it was believed that the teaching about facing Jerusalem for prayers was originally part of the Qur’an until that verse was replaced with a verse commanding Muslims to pray towards the Ka’ba. (8)

Apart from coming up with classifications, some influential scholars came to propose that even Sunnah and Hadith can supersede verses of the Holy Qur’an (a belief, like the others above, Ahmadis do not hold). The origins of many sects in Islam today lie in this controversial idea.

Some scholars of Islam went even further into the land of bizarre and wrote that some verses of the Qur’an were, God Forbid, inspired by Satan. The famous commentator of the Holy Qur’an, Al-Tabari of Persia, gave popularity to this idea by quoting the following verse of the Holy Qur’an:

“Satan put obstacles in the way of what he sought after.” (9)

Al-Tabari was obviously mistaken in interpreting this verse. Whatever obstacles Satan puts in the way of prophets, corrupting the Holy Qur’an is not one of them. This is because God has promised to safeguard Qur’anic revelation himself:

“Verily, We Ourselves have sent down this Exhortation, and most surely We will be its Guardian” (10)

In sum, up to 500 verses came to be declared as abrogated by one scholar or the other. These scholars did not agree on what these were. The actual number was, therefore, much higher and a significant part of the Qur’an was written off as contradictory, superseded, satanic, or lost. This was what the Holy Qur’an was reduced to by the so-called scholars of Islam, who

are still held in reverence today.

A Matter of Understanding

It must be emphasized again that there is no verse in the Qur’an that is known to explicitly abrogate any other verse or any authentic Hadith of Holy Prophet (sa) explicitly abrogates any verse the Qur’an. Any verse ever declared abrogated by a scholar was his own opinion only and based completely on conjecture. It was ignoring basic principles of Qur’anic interpretation that brought Muslims down this path. The Holy Qur’an itself explains how some people can contrive things like abrogation:

“He it is Who has sent down to thee the Book; in it there are verses that are decisive in meaning — they are the basis of the Book — and there are others that are susceptible of different interpretations. But those in whose hearts is perversity pursue such thereof as are susceptible of different interpretations, seeking discord and seeking wrong interpretation of it.” (11)

A more careful study of the Holy Qur’an, therefore, led some scholars to rise above others in this matter.

The 13th century commentator of Holy Qur’an, Ibn Kathir, realized that Muslims had been too quick to discard verses that pertain to incidents and stories of the past. He wrote that such verses need not be put under the axe of abrogation. The 16th century scholar of the Holy Qur’an, Al-Suyuti, provided broader explanation of many verses. However, he was unable to provide suitable explanation for some twenty-one verses that he believed to be abrogated. This number was, however, further reduced to just five by Shah Waliullah Delawai, an Indian Islamic scholar of the 18th Century.

It is said that when Hazrat Maulana Hakeem Noor-ud-Din (ra) came across the books of Al-Suyuti and Shah Waliullah, he concluded that the Holy Qur’an must be free of contradictions and that the question of abrogation was a matter of reflection and understanding of it. Later in his life, he was able to resolve the five remaining verses as well.



Services of Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (as) of Qadian, the Promised Messiah and Mahdi:

Despite the noble efforts of some scholars in providing suitable explanations of seemingly contradictory verses, their work remained largely academic and confined to their small circle of followers. Damage done over centuries of misguided religious indoctrination can seldom be undone easily. It requires a Divine decree. Things took a turn for real only when Allah appointed Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (as) in late 19th century to the service of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (sa) and Islam.

In his book "Chashmah Maarifat," Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (as) categorically rejected the idea of abrogation. He extensively wrote and spoke about the perfection of the Holy Qur'an and declared it to be free from any blemish including any contradictions.⁽¹²⁾

To prove his point against abrogation, he took verses under question and demonstrated that not only were they not contradictory, they in fact contained the most beautiful and wisest of Islamic teachings. For example, while some Muslims believed that verse "there is no compulsion in religion" (13) was abrogated, Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (as) explained that this verse teaches freedom of conscience. He said that this teaching is unique only to Islam because it is the only religion that can appeal to human reason. The rest of the verse proves the point by declaring: "...because right has been distinguished from wrong." Any seemingly contradictory verses that command Muslims to kill idolaters, he explained, need to be understood in context and when studied with care it becomes clear that these verses are meant for kill those disbelievers who attack Muslims and who break treaties. (14) The writings of Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (as) has had such an effect that now even many non-Ahamdi Muslims present the same verse "There should be no compulsion in religion" (15) in front of non-Muslims to prove the superiority of Islam over other religions.

Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (as) also laid out rules for proper interpretation of the Qur'an his writings. However, he was not limited to writing scholarly books in his service to Islam. He went on to establish a dedicated organization that practices and preaches the true teachings of Islam in all corners of the world. The world-wide Ahmadiyya Muslim community works under the spiritual leadership of a Khalifa to eradicate erroneous doctrines in Islam and defends Islam from the intellectual attacks of non-Muslims. It publishes books and articles, hosts Qur'an exhibitions, and seminars to educate people around the world.

Most recently, the Ahmadiyya community launched a campaign of "True Islam and the extremist (TrueIslam)." (16) This campaign invites all Muslims to endorse eleven points which are given elsewhere in this publication. These points include the belief that all verses of the Holy Qur'an are valid and that there are no superfluous or contradiction in it. Indeed, the Word of God is perfect.

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No Religion can Monopolize Salvation

Amtul Kafi Yadullah Bhunoo

From the Islamic perspective, no particular religion has a monopoly over salvation – that is, being saved from committing sins as well as from the punishment of one's wrong actions. Nevertheless, the religious leaders of most of the faith traditions appear to dismiss all those to an everlasting hell who do not conform to their particular belief system. It is crucial to note, of course, that not all religions have a shared understanding of what constitutes salvation; for most, salvation is a lifelong process, aided by both the discipline of ritual and the moral teachings of the faith. This article will provide a brief overview of the teachings of the path to salvation of five religions: Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism, Christianity and Islam.

Hinduism, more than 5000 years old, and a very complex religion, has diverse teachings regarding salvation. The Hindu Holy Scriptures, the Vedas, teach worship of many gods, and, to obtain salvation, a Hindu has to offer prayers, give donations, and repeat certain incantations. Many Hindus adhere to the teachings and lessons in the epic books, the Mahabharata and the Ramayana, believing that common man can receive salvation through devotion to any one of the many gods – such as idols, rivers, trees, or mountains. They lay great stress on visiting sacred places and observing particular religious ceremonies. Some Hindu sects believe that the knowledge of the Supreme Reality is the proper way to salvation. The Supreme Reality is God who is the Cosmic Power. Those who will understand the Supreme Reality will attain salvation. Another Hindu belief is the transmigration of souls – that is, after death, the soul goes from one body to another, and true salvation comes through the final release from this prolonged process of transmigration of the soul.

In the Hindu Code of Manu, salvation comes through showing obedience to the Law of Manu. For those Hindus who worship the god Siva, it is necessary to be repentant of one's sins to obtain salvation; and performance of religious ceremonies – such as taking a bath in sacred rivers, uttering specific mantras, and trying to become good, can lead to salvation. Some modern Hindu reformers, such as Rama Krishna Parama-Hansa (1834-1886), who was a contemporary of the Promised Messiah (as), taught that all religions are equally good, and salvation can be obtained through any one of them. The main method to receive salvation is meditation (called Samadhi) – that is, remaining focused on God.

In Buddhism, the concept of salvation is different from Hinduism. The Buddhists believe that human suffering of all kinds is an unavoidable part of life. Human suffering constitutes the hell from which humanity needs to be set free. The root cause of all human suffering is self-centered desire and the love of



existence. Therefore, salvation means to get rid of this self-centered desire of the human heart. As this particular method of achieving salvation is virtually impossible for a lay person, therefore, only the Buddhist monks and nuns attempt to follow that enlightened path.

In Judaism, a Jew is deemed to be the master of his own fate, and salvation is achieved through good works. God has given freedom to humans to choose between good and evil, and through execution of free will, one can overcome the temptation to commit sin. The Jewish Holy Scriptures teach that a person is not born in sin, and righteousness can lead to salvation. In the Old Testament, in the Book of Isaiah (26:2) it is written: 'Open the gate, so that the righteous nation that keeps the faith may enter.' To remain righteous, the Jews have to uphold the commandments of God as written in the Torah. After committing a sin, the door of repentance is open, and if one does good, his righteousness can be counted.

Christianity, on the other hand, teaches that every person is born in sin due to the original sin committed by Adam and Eve; thereafter, the way for salvation is to believe in Jesus as the only begotten Son of God who died on the cross for the sake of the sins of all mankind, and to believe that he was resurrected after remaining dead and entering Hell for three days. Those who do not believe in Jesus as their Savior are doomed to go to Hell, and remain there forever.

In his book, "Four Questions by a Christian and their Answers," Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (as) expounds upon the contrast with Christianity in this regard, and refers to a similarity with Judaism: "After much analysis, we can conclude that neither the Torah nor any other book of the Jews teaches this kind of accursed sacrifice (as was inflicted on Jesus). I recently wrote letters to some

prominent Jewish scholars asking them to state under oath what their Torah and other scriptures teach them about salvation. Have they been taught to believe in the redemption of mankind through the sacrifice of God's son, or have they been taught something else? They replied that, as far as salvation is concerned, the teaching of the Torah is in full accord with that of the Qur'an which teaches that turning towards God with all sincerity, seeking forgiveness for one's sins, doing good deeds, refraining from carnal passions with a view to pleasing God, observing Divine prohibitions and injunctions and following Divine precepts and commandments in letter and spirit are the only means to salvation. Departure from these teachings, which have been repeatedly mentioned in the Torah and stressed by God's holy Prophets, has brought punishment on many. These Jewish scholars did not only send me detailed letters but also presented me with a number of rare and excellent books written by their scholars on this subject."

Islam claims that God is the Creator of all, He is Most Gracious, the Most Merciful, and He loves all His creation. The true Islam recognizes that the right to decide who goes to heaven and who goes to hell is exclusively the judgment of God alone. His mercy is the most overwhelming and most sought-after attribute. In the Holy Qur'an, God says: "I will inflict My punishment on whom I will; but My mercy encompasses all things." (1) At another place, the Holy Qur'an states: "Allah has promised those who believe and do good deeds that they shall have forgiveness and great reward." (2) Again, the Holy Qur'an states: "Surely, those who believe (that is the Muslims), the Jews, the Christians and the Sabians – whichever party from among these truly believes in Allah and the Last Day and does good deeds, shall have their reward with their Lord, and no fear shall come upon them, nor shall they grieve." (3) This verse of the Qur'an needs to be understood properly. There are two ways to look at the significance of this verse. First, there are believers belonging to other faith traditions who have not heard about Islam and the Holy Prophet Muhammad (sa), and they believe in One God, the Last Day, and they do good and pious works according to the best of their abilities. Those who live a life without any true knowledge of God's most recently revealed commandments through no fault of their own, and who generally try to live a good life based on the ancient revealed books, they will not be denied salvation by God. Elaborating on this point, Hazrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad (rh) comments in his book, *Islam's Response to Contemporary Issues*: "As such, followers of all religions based on divine revelation have been granted assurance that provided they do not fail to recognize the truth of a new religion (despite their sincere efforts to understand) and stick honestly and truly to the values of their ancestral religion, they have nothing to fear from God and will not be denied salvation." (4)

Secondly, there are followers of other religions – such as the Jews, the Christians, and others, who have received the message of Islam and have full knowledge of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (sa) being the Prophet sent to all mankind, and have the knowledge of the truth revealed to the Prophet Muhammad (sa), but have rejected the truth, intentionally. This verse does not apply to them. For them salvation is through acceptance of the whole truth by believing in the Prophet Muhammad (sa) and the Holy Qur'an. As Allah sent the

Holy Prophet, so it cannot be said about those who know about him that they believe in Allah in the true sense of the word.

In Islam, therefore, salvation depends on perfect faith in the real Creator of all, Who is all-Powerful, and Who will be the Final Judge. As Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (as) says in "Four Questions by a Christian and their Answers": "Man achieves true success only when he establishes himself in God with sincerity and steadfastness, and roots himself in His love with the help of Istighfar (seeking forgiveness) and then draws Divine water through meekness and humility, surrendering himself to God and repenting in both word and deed. Thus he draws heavenly water to himself in such a way that it removes all the dryness caused by sin, and he is able to overcome his weaknesses." (5)

He further explains: "What the Holy Qur'an has said in this context amounts to this: 'O My servants, do not despair of Me. I am Merciful and Benevolent and cover up sins and forgive them and am more Merciful towards you than anyone else. No one will have mercy on you as I have. Love me more than you love your fathers for I am greater in love than they are. If you come to me I shall forgive all your sins and if you repent, I shall accept your repentance. If you advance towards me slowly, I shall run to you. He who seeks Me shall find Me and He who turns to Me shall find My door open. I forgive the sins of a penitent even if they are more than the mountains. My mercy upon you is great and my wrath is little because you are My creatures. I have created you and therefore My mercy comprises all of you.'" (6)

The above paragraph makes it clear that there should be no love greater than the Love for God, no religion can monopolize salvation, and every human being can achieve salvation regardless of their religion, as long as love of God takes precedence over all worldly affairs.

Amtul Kafi Yadullah Bhunnoo is a student at Kingston University, UK, and has a keen interest in religion and current affairs.

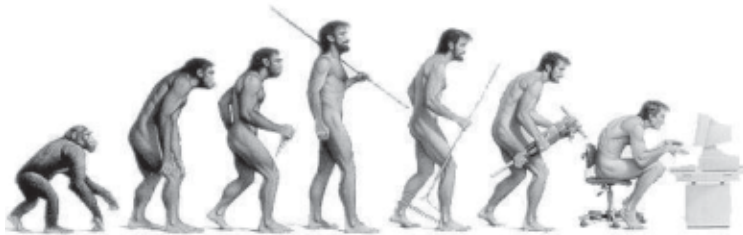
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RELIGION & SCIENCE

Challenging Dr. Ben Carson to a Written Debate about Facts of Evolution from Molecular Biology

Zia H Shah MD, Chief Editor of the Muslim Times



I had issued this challenge originally in November of 2015. However, now that Dr. Carson has pulled out of the Presidential race and endorsed Donald Trump as the Presidential candidate for the Republican Party, it is more likely that he may pay heed to academic pursuits rather than political ambitions. So, let me revisit the issue through this volume of the Muslim Sunrise.

Republican presidential contender Ben Carson restated his views on creationism Sunday (Nov. 1, 2015), wrapping up his weekend in Tennessee with a visit to one of Metro Nashville's largest churches.

This is not the first time Carson has spoken about his doubts on evolution. Several national publications, including The Washington Post, BuzzFeed and others, have noted a speech from 2012 and other comments where Carson likened the big bang theory to "fairy tales" and questioned the motivation behind Charles Darwin's theory of evolution. (1)

It seems he would say anything which is apparently popular among the Republican base to rise in the polls. Fully two-thirds of seventh-day Adventists (67%), the denomination that Ben Carson belongs to, rejects evolution, saying that humans have always existed in their present form. This mirrors Carson's view: The candidate has been a vocal critic of evolution, saying that it is impossible to believe in both God and evolution at the same time. (2)

As a successful Neurosurgeon, who would be knowledgeable in molecular biology, he should know better than this.

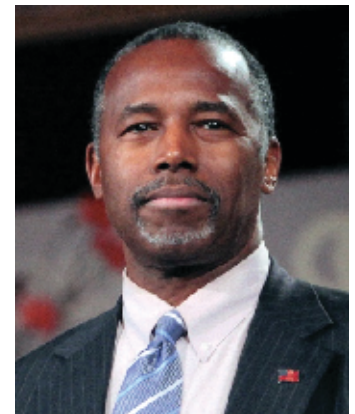
Carson delivered two speeches at Cornerstone Church in Madison. The words from Carson, a retired neurosurgeon, who did rise to the top position in GOP presidential polls, for a short period of time, sounded at times like a stump speech and a sermon.

Carson said during his second speech, referencing "progressives" in these words: "They say, 'Carson, ya know, how can you be a surgeon, a neurosurgeon, and believe that God created the Earth, and not believe in evolution, which is the basis of all knowledge and all science?'"

"Well, you know, it's kind of funny. But I do believe God created us, and I did just fine. So I don't know where they get that stuff from, ya know? It's not true. And in fact, the more you know about God, and the deeper your relationship with God, I think the more intricate becomes your knowledge of the way things work, including the human body."

Unlike Carson, I believe in God but I also believe in rational understanding of our universe and our planet and millions of life forms that have existed on our planet over the millennia.

So, I invite him to a written debate about the facts of evolution in molecular biology that establish beyond any reasonable doubt that all life forms on our planet earth are linked to each other, through the process of evolution, as proposed by Charles Darwin, more than 150 years ago.





Darwin's tree of life

To make it easy for him, I will even show him my hand of cards, as suggested reading and viewing below. A lot of tricks can be pulled in face to face debate and I am well aware of those. So, realizing some of my limitations, I do not want to debate face to face, rather engage in a written debate, where evidence will be the final determinant. Let the debate begin!

I have tweeted the challenge to him and to the 38,500 followers of the Muslim Times. (3) But, I know, he will ignore it as Mahatma Gandhi told us, more than 6 decades ago, about every Goliath and David fight, 'First they ignore you, then they ridicule you, then they fight you, and then you win.' Only reason he will accept this challenge would be if my tweet begins to see scores and hundreds of retweets.[4]

In the meanwhile, however, everyone else is learning the facts by reading and viewing the materials below.

Suggested reading and viewing

- Charles Darwin: An Epiphany for the Muslims, A Catastrophe for the Christians (5)
- Molecular Biology a Checkmate to Creationism (6)
- 12 Minute Video: Everything You Wanted to Know About Guided Evolution (7)

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NEWS, VIEWS, & REVIEWS



"True Integration is to love the country in which you live"
Head of Ahmadiyya Muslim Community

On 11 May 2016, the World Head of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, the Fifth Khalifa (Caliph), His Holiness, Hazrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad was interviewed by Sveriges Television (Swedish TV) at the Mahmood Mosque in Malmo, Sweden.

During the interview, His Holiness was asked about the newly built Mahmood Mosque, the integration of immigrants and the rise of terrorism and youth radicalisation.

Upon being asked why the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community had built a Mosque in Malmo, Hazrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad said:

"The Holy Quran says that human beings should worship their Creator and so we have built this Mosque to bring people together to worship Allah the Almighty. Ahmadi Muslims will enter this Mosque five times a day to worship and will offer the weekly Friday prayers here."

Speaking about the Mosque itself, Hazrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad said:

"This Mosque is extremely beautiful and I hope that the local Swedish people will also consider it to be a positive addition to their environment."

His Holiness was asked about the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community's well-known slogan 'Love for All, Hatred for None'.



In response, Hazrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad said:

"Love for All, Hatred for None is actually the basis of the Quran's teachings because Islam means peace and love for all of mankind. Thus, we do not consider anyone to be our enemy and nor do we desire harm to any person."

Regarding the activities of terrorist groups such as Daesh, Hazrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad said:

"Anyone who preaches or propagates any form of extremism acts completely against the true teachings of Islam and is to be condemned. We Ahmadi Muslims, are peace loving and so no Ahmadi Muslim has any desire to join extremist groups. We teach our children from childhood that to be peaceful is an essential part of their faith."

Regarding the issue of integration of immigrants into Western society, Hazrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad said:

"For me, true integration is to love the country in which you live and to be completely loyal to it. Thus, all immigrants should be loyal to their adopted nation, they should truly love it, they should honour it, they should be law abiding and work for its prosperity and progress. This is integration."

Asked if Ahmadi Muslims were particularly threatened in Europe, Hazrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad said:

"Due to the threat of Daesh and other terrorist groups, all people are at risk and there is a general threat to peace. However, there are also some who particularly seek to cause harm to Ahmadi Muslims and so we have to remain vigilant."



[Although Sadiq Khan was elected and many — not all— of the figures I point to below were appointed, that's the way it was in history. The then London County Council was first elected in 1889, and the mayor has only been directly elected since 2000; all urban leaders were appointed until fairly recently.]

It is worthwhile pointing out that the idea of Europe as "Christian" or perhaps "post-Christian" is a construct that can only be carried out by applying very large scissors to the history books. Christian nativism in Europe makes no sense. Christianity has its origins in the Middle East, as does Islam. It has seen several waves of immigration, with people coming from what is now Turkey and Syria and from Eurasia and Africa.

Christianity only started spreading seriously in Europe from the fourth century CE [AD], and by the eighth century, only four hundred years later, it had serious competition in Spain and southern France from Islam. Christianity was adopted more slowly than most people realize, with large pockets of essentially pagan survivals and heresies lasting for hundreds of more years— so medieval European religion should be seen as tripartite in these centuries — pagan survivals, spreading Christianity, and spreading Islam. Islam is a major European religion and is a nearly 1300 year old tradition there.

Sitting elected Muslim mayors include Erion Veliaj of Tirana, Ahmed Aboutaleb of Rotterdam, and Shpend Ahmeti of Pristina. Muslim-majority Sarajevo elected Ivo Komšić, a Christian, in 2013.

Going back into history, parts of Spain, and often quite a lot of it, were under Muslim rule 711 to 1492. So for example, Abd al-Rahman I was proclaimed Emir of Cordoba in 756. We're talking major Western European city here. In the 900s Cordoba was the most populous city in the world.

The Arab Muslim emirate of Sicily lasted from 831 to 1072. For example, Jafar al-Kalbi (983–985) was emir of Sicily, and therefore mayor of Palermo, the capital. The Ottoman Empire ruled most of what is now Greece 1458-1832.

Athens counts as a major European city. It was under Ottoman control for nearly 400 years.

London's Muslim Mayor is nothing New: 1300 years of Muslims who Ran Major European Cities



By Juan Cole | May. 7, 2016 | 49 | 234 | 6459 | 82

The press is declaring Sadiq Khan, victor in the electoral contest for mayor of London, the "first Muslim mayor of a major European city." They mean of course, something like 'the first Muslim mayor of a really big Western European city in the modern period (say the past two centuries).

The Ottomans ruled much of Hungary 1541 to 1699, and Buda (half of the later twin city of Budapest) was the capital of this province of the empire. While there, the Ottomans supported the Protestant movement in Hungary. Abdurrahman Abdi Pasha the Albanian, e.g., became the military governor of Buda in 1682. Budapest has to count as a major European city.

Serbia was under Ottoman rule 1402–1878 (later in that period as a vassal); for instance, Hacı Mustafa Aga was appointed the military governor of Belgrade in July 1793. Not to mention that Constantinople/ Istanbul is one of the larger European cities (14 million inside city limits!). The mayor is Dr. Kadir Topbas. He is a Muslim.

So Muslim heads of major European cities have been commonplace for nearly 1300 years, and even at the beginning of the 20th century a few Balkan cities still had Muslim governors. Sadiq Khan's victory is a great one and we should be happy that an Islamophobic and scurrilous campaign against him by the Tories was thwarted by the good sense of Londoners. But let us not exacerbate the weird amnesia of Europe about how central Islam and Muslims have been to its history since the eighth century (when the post-Roman Byzantine Empire, founded by Heraclius in 610, was only a century old itself). Sadiq Khan has many illustrious predecessors among European Muslim urban leaders.



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poetry CORNER

DIVINE HELP

Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad,
Promised Messiah and Mahdi (as)

Translated by: Sufi A. Q. Niaz

To the righteous
And holy people of God,
Comes the help and succor
Of God—without fail:
And when it comes,
For the whole world
It puts on display
A universe of the most
Miraculous things!

At times
It turns into a strong gale,
Which sweeps the path
Clear of obstacles
Of all kinds, as if they were
Of no more consequence,
Of no more weight
Than the merest chaff!
Again, at times, it comes
As a raging fire,
To reduce every opponent
To a heap of ash!

Or it turns
Into dust and ashes,
Which fall on the head
Of the enemy, to denote
His discomfiture,
And disgrace; while oft
It assumes the shape
And form of water,
In a swirling flood,
To overwhelm them,
And drown them all
In an irresistible
Upsurge of the waves!

In short, the works of God,
And the purpose of God,
Can never be interrupted
By the weak and helpless,
Designs of mortal men:
For, indeed, how can things
Created, come to have
Any kind of strength, when pitted
Against the limitless might
Of the Creator Himself?

نصرت الہی
(منقول از برائین احمدیہ صفحہ دوم صفحہ ۱۰۶ مطبوعہ ۱۸۸۵ء)
خدا کے پاک لوگوں کو خدا سے نصرت آتی ہے
جب آتی ہے تو پھر عالم کو اک عالم دکھاتی ہے



Women's Corner

Women's Space in the Mosque

By Shahina Bashir

In her book, "Mecca and Main Street: Muslim Life in America After 9/11" [1], author Geneive Abdo described the plight of Muslim women in America who are struggling for their rightful space in their mosques. Abdo describes the conditions in mosques where women are relegated to dark and dank basements or small tight areas. They also are meant to access the mosques through back doors or near the fire escapes. These women are excluded from the mosques' boards and do not have ways to organize community activities. The common complaint from these women is that the audio system is so poor that they can hardly hear the Friday sermons delivered by the Imams. Although the first mosque in the U.S. was built in the 1920's, a growth in mosques took place in the 1980's when America saw an influx of Muslim immigrants. For these newcomers, the mosque was not only a place of worship but a gathering place for the community members searching for people who shared common values in their newly adopted home. Many of the immigrants arrived from South Asian countries where women have been discouraged from praying in the mosques, until recently. However, as these women became part of the American society, they learned about the fight for women's rights in their new homeland and soon began to realize that they were not receiving their due share of the mosque space. The challenge of women-friendly mosques in America has been in the forefront during the last decade and a half.

In many Muslim countries women are prevented from attending mosques. In India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh, very few women pray in mosques, although there is currently a marked improvement in women's attendance in these countries. While a record breaking number of women attended the Eidul Fitr Prayer in Dhaka, Bangladesh in 2014 [2], women in Pakistan [3] are still not prepared to participate in the Eid Prayer at the mosque, in spite of a Sunnah of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (sa) which clearly supports the contrary [4]. The absence of women in mosques in these countries stems from the fundamentalist teachings of Maulana Abul A'la Maududi (1903-1979) who was



the Jama'at-i-Islami party [5]. He believed that a woman's primary role is to stay at home and care for the household. This ideology also meant that women did not need to go to mosques and were better off meeting their religious obligations within the confines of their homes. Many of the immigrants from the South Asian countries brought with them the Maududian philosophies and enjoined similar restrictions on mosque attendance by women.

In early 2010, a group of Muslim women led protests at some Washington D.C. area mosques [6]. They demanded to be allowed to pray in the men's hall without any barriers. Asra Nomani, a journalist and an outspoken activist, was part of the protest. In 2009, PBS aired the documentary film, "The Mosque in Morgantown" [7], in which Nomani talks about the extremist ideologies being practiced and discrimination against the women of the community at the Islamic Center of



Protestors outside the Islamic Center of Washington, D.C.

Credit: Julia Marsh

Morgantown, West Virginia. She complained about the women's entrance which was behind the mosque and the restriction placed on women from entering through the main door. Her protests initiated national media attention and she was hailed as a social reformer who would see to it that Muslim women were treated as equals at the mosques, not only in America but across the world.

Hind Makki, an African immigrant living in Chicago, is an active blogger who writes about various issues related to Islam and Muslims [8]. Makki said that in the mid-90's she and her sister had gone to a mosque in Chicago with her father. An elderly man told Makki's father that women and girls are not allowed in the mosque. Fortunately, the mosque she visited in her younger days is now open to women. In 2012 she started a blog, "Side Entrance" [9] which "showcases photos and stories of women's and girls' experiences in mosques" from around the world. She wanted to keep a repository of photos of mosques which showed what the women's spaces are like. Many of the photos reveal equitable spaces for women while others show the stark disparity between men's Prayer halls and those for the women.

To counter what many Muslim women see as discrimination in the mosque, the first American women-only mosque opened in Los Angeles, California, in January, 2015 [10]. Explaining the reason behind its creation, the mosque's website states [11]:

"The Women's Mosque of America seeks to uplift the Muslim community by empowering women and girls through more direct access to Islamic scholarship and leadership opportunities. The Women's Mosque of America provides a safe space for women to feel welcome, respected, and actively engaged within the Muslim Ummah. It complements existing mosques, offering opportunities for women to grow, learn, and gain inspiration to spread throughout their respective communities."

Once a month the Women's Mosque of America holds Jumu'ah Prayers which are led by women and are exclusively for women, girls, and boys under twelve.

After many years of protests and activism by American Muslim women, the Islamic Society of North America (ISNA) released a "Statement on the Inclusion of Women in the Masjids" in September, 2015 [12]. The statement assures that all mosques under the umbrella of ISNA would be women-friendly, allowing women to pray in the main Prayer hall without any barriers. The men will occupy the front rows followed by children and behind them would be the women. The statement also says that women will be involved in all mosque decision-making processes.

In contrast to the discrimination that Muslim women are facing around the world when it comes to mosque space, the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community solved this problem almost one hundred years ago. When Hazrat Mirza Bashir-ud-Din Mahmood Ahmad (ra) was elected as the second caliph (Khalifa) of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, he felt that the participation of women was as important for the success of the Community as was that of men. In 1922, therefore, he established an association for the women called "Lajna Ima'illah" or "Maid Servants of Allah" [13]. The Women's Auxiliary of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, USA, has a membership of more than 5,000 with 72 chapters across the country. Although there is strict adherence to the Islamic injunction of the separation of the genders, Ahmadi Muslim women have always had equal access to the mosques and have been participating in various religious activities, including religious education and moral training of adult women of all ages, as well as of children. During the Annual Convention (Jalsa Salana) of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, the women organize and hold their own daylong session with speeches on a variety of topics revolving around the status and role of women in Islam.

The "Religion & Ethics NewsWeekly" episode aired on January 2012 [14], reported on the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, USA. The National President of the Women's Auxiliary of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, USA, Saliha Malik, spoke about the way the Ahmadi Muslim women are empowered:

"We are given a voice in our community. The women have a voice: we are very well- educated and we are very knowledgeable about our religion," Malik said.



Nusrat Jahan Mosque - Copenhagen, Denmark

For almost a century, Ahmadi Muslim women have been a vital part of the continued success of the worldwide Ahmadiyya Muslim Community. Under the leadership of the Khalifa, they have been accorded a status on a par with their male counterparts. The planning and layout of mosques built by the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community affords the same consideration to the women as it does to the men. They are also able to use the mosque facilities during their own women-only programs and have organized and executed well-attended and well-received inter-faith events to dispel many of the misconceptions about Islam propagated, unfortunately, by the extremists. In fact, several times a year the women have exclusive use of the entire mosque for their events. Not only do the women have unrestricted access to their mosques around the world, they have

also been vital in the building of mosques throughout the years. The Fazl Mosque in London, England (inaugurated in 1926) was built with huge contributions from Ahmadi Muslim women of Qadian, India. Three other mosques in Europe, one in Hamburg, East Germany (in 1957), the Nusrat Jahan Mosque in Denmark (in 1967), and the Khadijah Mosque in Berlin (in 2008), were built with donations primarily from women and girls. In America too Ahmadi Muslim women are in the forefront of contributing towards the building of mosques all around the country. For the Ahmadi Muslim women there is no need to squabble over space, well-appointed entrances, or equal rights. They already have these: they do not need to step into the men's Prayer hall, nor open a women-only mosque.

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FROM THE ARCHIVE

Muslim Sunrise, May 1938

Islamic Form of Government

***Hazrat Mirza Bashir-ud-din Mahmud Ahmad
Khalifatul Masih II***

In dealing with this subject the first question with which we are faced is, how does Islam define the Sovereign, or the State? In Islamic terminology, the Sovereign or Khalifa is that representative individual whom the people of a country elect for the protection and supervision of their individual and communal rights. Islam does not acknowledge any form of government other than representative government. The Holy Quran has used the word "Amanat" (trust) in describing the Islamic conception of government, that is to say, the Khalifa exercises the power that is entrusted to him by the people, and not the power which is assumed by him of his own will or which is inherited by him as a birth right. This word alone is sufficient to illustrate the nature and power of an Islamic government. The Holy Quran does not speak of the right of government as something proceeding from the Sovereign to the subject, but as something proceeding from the subject to the Sovereign. For full appreciation, however, of the Islamic conception of the State, it is necessary to quote the verse, which in brief but comprehensive terms describe the nature and duties of the rulers and the ruled. The Holy Quran says,

"God commands you to entrust the responsibility of government to those worthy of it, and those of you who become rulers, should rule justly; God admonishes you with that which is excellent, verily He is Hearing, Seeing." (1)

In the first part of this verse the people are told that it lies with them to choose their rulers, and that nobody else can appoint a ruler over them, that is to say, Sovereignty is not hereditary and nobody is entitled to become a sovereign merely because he happens to be a son of the previous Sovereign. Rulership is then defined as a trust and people are admonished not to entrust it to a person who is not worthy of the trust, but to place the responsibility on the shoulders of him who would discharge it honestly and faithfully. Then, we are told that the government is not an independent thing in itself, but is a mere

delegation of powers for the purpose of enforcing and protecting certain rights which the people cannot individually enforce and protect owing to the large number of persons concerned. It is, therefore, a trust, and not in the nature of property. The ownership of the rights concerned is vested in the community and not in the Sovereign. Again, the latter is told that the power vested in him is by way of trust and that he must not abuse or misuse it, and must hand it over to the beneficiaries at the time of his death without deterioration or diminution, that is to say, he must be vigilant in the protection of national and individual interest and rights, and that he would have no power to surrender or damage any portion of them. Rulers and officials are next told to discharge the respective duties of their offices justly and faithfully. The verse then goes on to indicate that the Muslims would forsake this mode of government and would, in imitation of other people, revert to the monarchical and hereditary form of government, but that the admonition of God, viz., that the Muslims should stick to the representative form of government, choosing their best brains to rule over them and to avoid the hereditary form of government, is the best advice. The concluding words of the verse indicate that God has prescribed this mode of government seeing evils of other forms of government adopted by men and hearing the prayers of those who suffered under them, and that the Muslims should, therefore, adhere to it and thus show their gratitude for the favor that God had done them.

From this it is clear that the Islamic form of government must be based on an elective and representative basis, and that the Sovereign is regarded as the representative of the people in their collective and not their individual capacity. I shall now draw a brief sketch of the Islamic form of government, so as to illustrate its different functions and aspects.

Islam requires the Muslims to elect as their ruler a man whom they regard as best fitted to discharge the responsibilities of that office. Such a man, when elected, holds office, not for a period of years like the Presidents of the Western Republics but for life, and God alone can remove him from office, i.e., by means of death. In this man is invested all the power and authority of government, but it is his duty to devote the whole of his life to the promotion of the welfare of his country and not to the seeking of his

own aggrandizement. His control over the treasury is limited to the spending of money for national needs and requirements, and he cannot, therefore, fix his own allowance. This must be done by his advisory council. It is the duty of the Sovereign to ascertain the views of the people through this council. On special occasions and with reference to special matters the opinion of the people may be ascertained by means of a general referendum, so that any differences between the opinion of the people and their representatives may come to his knowledge. He is expected to respect the opinion of a majority of the representatives, but as he is above all kinds of political partnership and has no personal interests to serve, his own opinion is believed to be entirely impartial and influenced only by considerations relating to the welfare of his country and his people. Besides being the true representative of his people, Islam promises special Divine Grace and help to the Khalifa. He is, therefore, authorized under special circumstances and in matters of special importance, to overrule the opinion of the majority of his advisers.

He is absolute in the sense, that he can, in certain cases, override the opinion of the representatives; on the other hand, his power is limited in the sense that he has no control over the Islamic constitution by which he is bound, and he cannot repeal or overrule any portion of it. He is bound to take the advice of the people and is bound to preserve the elective character of his own office. He is an elected ruler in the sense that, under the will and guidance of God, he is appointed to his office through the agency of the people, and he is a representative of the people in the sense that he is expected to follow the advice of their representatives except when compelled to differ from it by urgent or extraordinary necessity. He cannot, by his own authority, spend a penny out of the public funds on his own person or for his personal needs. He rules by virtue of a Divine right in the sense that he cannot be removed from his office, and is promised Divine aid in the discharge of his duties and in the carrying out of his undertaking.

The details as to the method of election or appointment of the members of the advisory council and the appointment of the governors and other officials, etc., have been purposely omitted by Islam so that they may be decided according to the exigencies of the time and so that human reason may have scope for work and expansion, a principal which is essential for the intellectual development of man. The Holy Quran prohibited the Muslims from questioning the Holy Prophet (sa) concerning every little detail for many matters are purposely left to the reason and judgment of men. If the smallest detail had been laid down by the Holy Quran or the Holy Prophet (sa) there would have been no scope left for the intellectual development and progress of man and thus serious injury would have been done to mankind.

There are several forms of government at present in existence, but everybody who studies the constitution laid down by Islam will be compelled to acknowledge that it is not possible to devise a better form of government. On the one hand it comprises the best form of representative government, and on the other it is entirely free from party spirit, for the sovereign is not dependent upon the aid or the cooperation of any particular party. He confines and devotes himself to the study of the welfare of his country and people, and as his office is held on a life tenure, the country is not deprived of the services of its best brain after a specified number of years.

We believe that this is the only perfect form of government, and we are confident that as the circle of the Ahmadiyya Movement widens and its membership increases, people will of their own free will acknowledge the excellence of this form of government, and even the sovereigns will renounce their hereditary rights in the interest of the welfare of their countries and will confine their privileges to those which they enjoy, and to which they are entitled as individuals.

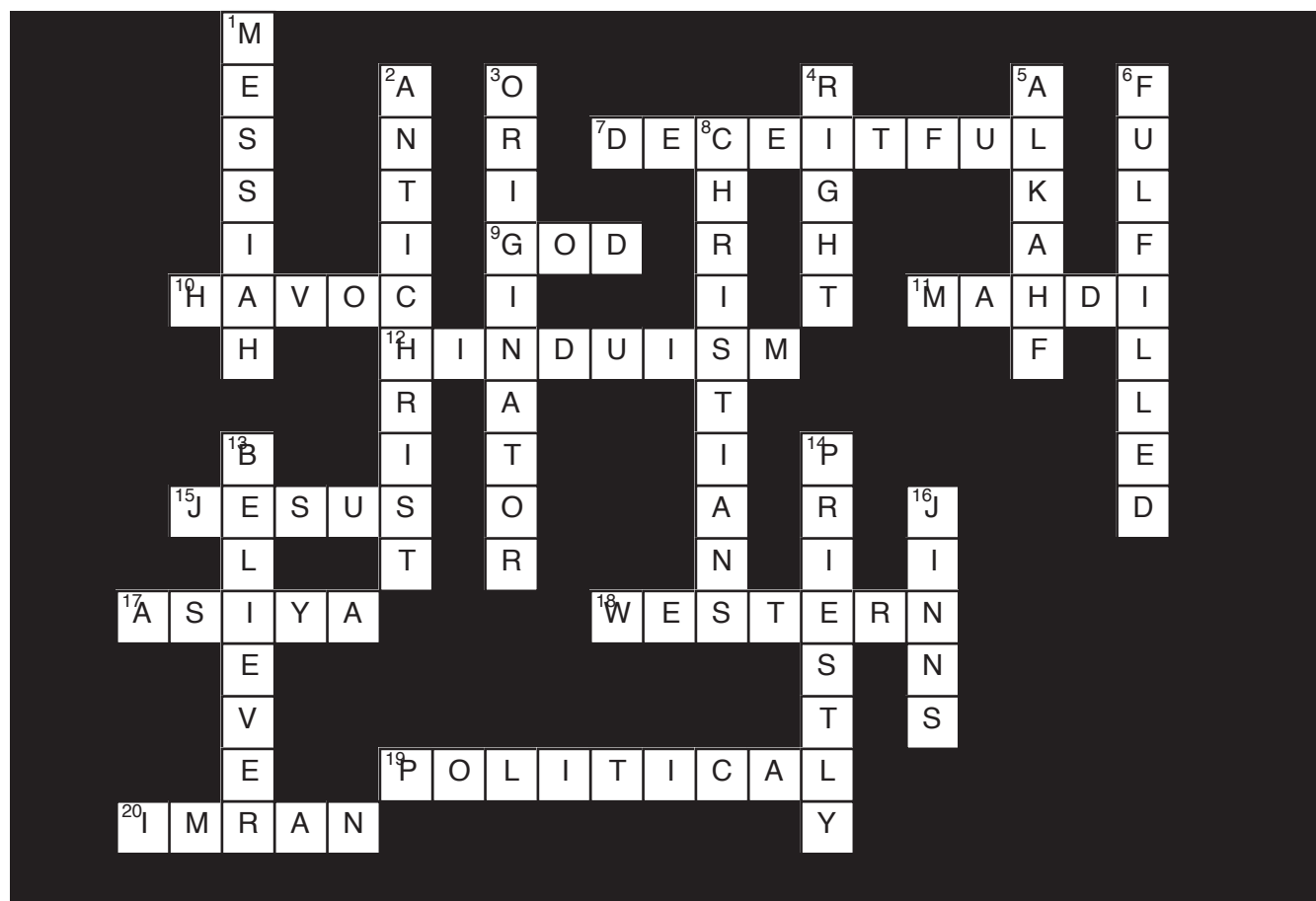
As the Promised Messiah (as) was only a spiritual Khalifa his successors will also, so far as possible, remain above politics, even at a time when sovereigns and states have joined the movement. They will perform the functions of a real League of Nations, and will endeavor, with the help and advice of the representatives of different countries, to regulate international relations. Their principal function will, however, be to look after the religious, moral, social and intellectual welfare of the people, so as to avoid their attention being monopolized by political matters, and important religious and moral affairs being neglected as was the case in the past. I have said, that they will 'so far as possible', remain aloof from and above politics. I have made this reservation to meet exceptional cases where the people of a particular country in a time of difficulty or crisis may request the aid of the spiritual Khilafat, and it may become necessary to make temporary arrangements for the government of that country. But such arrangements would be confined to the shortest possible period of time in each case.

References:

The Holy Qur'an, (4:58)

Crossword Puzzle

Crossword Puzzle answers from the Spring 2016 issue



Across

7. Dajjal are a group of people that are _____, cunning and full of lies. [DECEITFUL]
9. Dajjal shall first claim to be a prophet and then to be _____. [GOD]
10. Prophets dispel the evil effects of entities or people and beings who create _____ in the earth and lead people astray. [HAVOC]
11. There are two signs of our _____ which have never been manifested for any claimant since the creation of the heaven and earth. [MAHDI]
12. Arya Samaj, a reform movement in _____. [HINDUISM]
15. The final take on the appearance of the Antichrist must be by the words of _____. [JESUS]
17. Both Mary and _____ (wife of the pharaoh) were pious yet powerful. [ASIYA]
18. _____ nations are first and foremost traders and businessmen and no sane person could think of a businessman investing money where there are no dividends. [WESTERN]
19. He was to re-establish _____ sovereignty of Jews in the land of Israel, and bring all of the lost tribes back to his kingdom. [POLITICAL]
20. And sets forth as an example Mary, the daughter of _____, who guarded her chastity. [IMRAN]

Down

1. Belief in coming of a _____ is fundamental in Jewish faith. [MESSIAH]
2. The appearance and mention of the _____ is restricted to the New Testament where reference is specifically associated with the Second Coming of the Messiah. [ANTICHRIST]
3. According to the Islamic belief, God Almighty alone is the _____ of all that exists. [ORIGINATOR]
4. The _____ eye (of the Dajjal) is as if it is a shining star. [RIGHT]
5. The Holy Prophet Muhammad (sa) said that in order to protect oneself from the evils of the Dajjal, we must recite the first and last ten verses of Surah _____. [ALKAHF]
6. According to the Ahadith and prophecies of the Holy Qur'an, the signs of the Latter Days have been _____. [FULFILLED]
8. The Holy Qur'an then specifies that in the latter days the _____ will dominate the earth. [CHRISTIANS]
13. Whoso acts righteously, whether male or female and is a _____. [BELIEVER]
14. Scientists excluding those holding a _____ office have never found any evidence for them. [PRIESTLY]
16. A large majority of the Muslims also believe that demons exist and they call them by the Arabic word _____. [JINNS]



Questions & Answers

How were sects formed in Islam?

The original split between Sunnis and Shiites occurred soon after the death of the Prophet Muhammad (sa), in the year 632.

There was a dispute in the community of Muslims over the question of succession, that is to say, who is the rightful successor to the Prophet (sa)?

Most of the followers of Prophet Muhammad (sa) wanted the community of Muslims to determine who would succeed him. A smaller group thought that someone from his family should take up his mantle. They favored Hazrat Ali (ra), who was married to the Holy Prophet's (sa) daughter, Fatimah (ra).

Shia believed that leadership should stay within the family of the Holy Prophet (sa). Thus, they wanted Hazrat Ali, cousin and son-in-law of the Holy Prophet (sa). Sunnis believed that leadership should fall to the person who was deemed by the community to be best able to lead the community. And it was fundamentally this division that began the Sunni-Shia split.

Certain Branches of the Ahl-e-Sunnah wal-Jama'at

With respect to ordinary differences in certain ideologies and hidden/internal rules of conduct or minor differences in jurisprudential commandments, the Ahl-e-Sunnah wal-Jama'at are divided into different branches and sects. However, since all these groups agree with each other in basic ideologies and have identical thoughts and they accept the Holy Quran,

Sunnah, and Ahadith as the source of the Islāmic Sharia, and despite minor differences do not call each other infidels, rather, they prefer to be called, "Ahl-e-Sunnah wal-Jama'at", therefore, in principle they are considered as one sect. However, to introduce themselves or to do subversive activities they adopt different separate names also, e.g., with regards to their ideologies and conversational issues someone is Ash'ari, someone is Maturidi or Salfi Tasawwaf and with regards to internal rules of conduct some are known as Chishti, some as Suhrwardi, some as and some as Naqashbandi.

In the same way, with regards to the jurisprudential mode of conduct, some are known as Hanafi, some as Maliki, some as Shaf'i and some as Hanbali. Because there are so many different names and corroborative branches, to talk about these in detail is contrary to brevity. However, a necessary description of each large branch of the Ahl-e-Sunnah wal-Jama'at is being given below.

Based on the differences in beliefs and conversation-
alist the Ahl-e-Sunnah wal-Jama'at have the following branches:

1. Ashaa'irah
2. Maturidiyya
3. Salfiyya

Notable Sects of Shi'as

The following are the major sects of the Shi'as:

Al-Imamiyyah, Al-Zaidiyyah, Al-Kaisaniyyah

Al-Imamiyyah is further divided into following minor sects:

Al-Muhammadiyyah, Al-Baqiriyyah, An-Na'usiyyah, Ash-Shamitiyyah, Al-Imariyyah, Al-Musaviyyah, Al-Qat'iyyah, Al-Athna 'Ashriyyah

The Zaidiyyah has three minor sects

Al-Jarudiyyah, As-Sulaimaniyyah, Al-Butriyyah
There are two subsidiary sects of Al-Kisaniyyah. One sect believes that Imam Muhammad bin Al-Hanafiyyah is alive and he is the Mahdi Muntazir (awaited Mahdi). The second sect believes that Imam Muhammad bin Al-Hanafiyyah has died and after him his son Abu Hashim Abdullah is his vice-gent and wasi (heir). The founder of the Al-Kaisaniyya sect was Mukhtar Thaqfi.

The Shi'a's highly boastful (exaggeration liking sects) which are not part of the Imamiyyas are:

As-Sai'iyyah, Al-Mughiriyyah, Al-Mansooriyyah, Al-Khitabiyyah, Al-Batiniyyah, Al-Halooliyyah

generation, and they were extremely just and honest. They (the Companions of the Holy Prophet (sa)) were the first missionaries who learned from the Holy Prophet (sa) and then conveyed the message of Islam to the world without falling short in any way. Today the majority of Muslims belong to this sect of Islam and believe in the same ideologies.

*(Malik Saifur Rahman Sahib, Tarikh Afkar Islam)
Publisher: Nazart Isha'at, Sadr Anjuman Ahmadiyya
Pakistan, Rabwah, p. 16*

(Translated by Dr Karimullah Zirvi)

Which is the largest sect of the Muslims and what are their beliefs?

The largest sect of the Muslims is "Ahl-e-Sunnah wal-Jama'at"

Ahl-e-Sunnah wal-Jama'at means that sect of the Muslims which believes that the Holy Book, Sunnah, and Ahadith are Hujjat (solid argument) and the source of the Shari'ah (Islamic Religious Law). The majority of this sect also believes in that Ijma' (general agreement based on consensus) and Qiyas (application of analogy) are sources of the Shari'ah. In addition the Ahl-e-Sunnah wal-Jama'at have a sincere and deep honor and respect for the Companions of the Holy Prophet (sa) in their heart and believe that all of them were true in their sayings and in their actions with regards to the spreading of the religion of Islam, making efforts to safeguard the Holy Quran, and in communicating the sayings of the Holy Prophet (sa) to the coming

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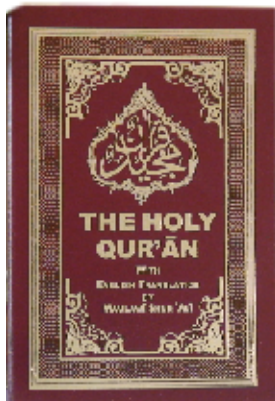
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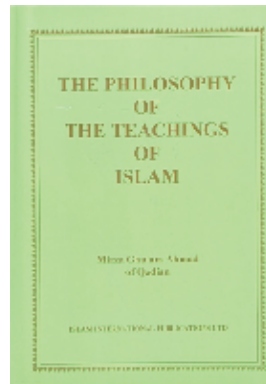


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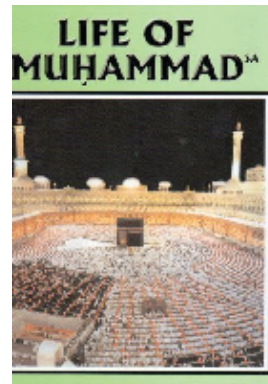
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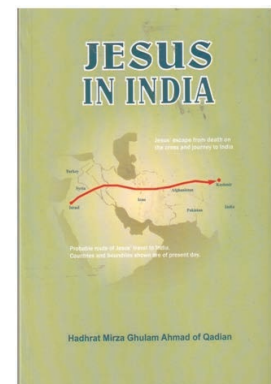
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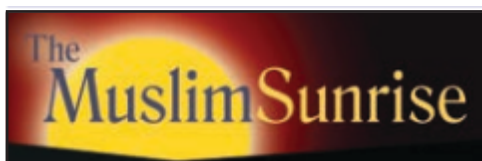


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